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JONAS OF BOBBIO AND THE LEGACY OF COLUMBANUS

Sanctity and Community in the Seventh Century



ALEXANDER O'HARA

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*Jonas of Bobbio and
the Legacy of Columbanus*

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*To my mother
Nuala Brigid O'Hara*

&

all those who encouraged and inspired me in my historical research

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Preface

This is the final volume in a trilogy of studies on the Italian monk and hagiographer Jonas of Bobbio, the Irish monastic founder Columbanus, and the Columbanian monastic network in seventh-century Merovingian Gaul and Lombard Italy. The first volume, an annotated translation of Jonas's three saints' Lives, was published in the Translated Texts for Historians series with Liverpool University Press in 2017, the result of a long-standing collaboration between myself and Professor Ian Wood. The second volume, an edited collection of essays on *Columbanus and the Peoples of Post-Roman Europe*, followed in the Oxford Studies in Late Antiquity series and grew out of a conference I organized in Vienna in November 2013. This monograph study, which I hope will serve as a companion volume to the TTH translation, is derived in large part from my PhD thesis of 2009, carried out under the supervision of Professor Robert Bartlett at the University of St Andrews and funded by a scholarship from the Carnegie Trust. I am grateful first of all to Robert Bartlett for his teaching, mentorship, and inspiration through the years since I was an undergraduate student at St Andrews and to the Carnegie Trust for funding my doctoral research. A research fellowship at the Institut für Mittelalterforschung at the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna from 2009 to 2016 enabled me to continue to work on this and other projects for a sustained period. I am grateful to all my colleagues at the Institut für Mittelalterforschung, especially to Walter Pohl, Maximilian Diesenberger, Richard Corradini, Francesco Borri, Andreas Fischer, and Philipp Dörler. Albrecht Diem, Ian Wood, Jamie Kreiner, Thomas Charles-Edwards, Patrick Geary, Clare Stancliffe, Paul Fouracre, Yaniv Fox, James Palmer, Martin McNamara, and the anonymous readers for Oxford University Press have, in various ways, helped me to improve the work. I am grateful for their input and constructive criticism. Any errors that remain are my own. Series editor Ralph Mathisen has been encouraging and supportive

of this project from the start, and my sincere thanks go to him and to Stefan Vranka at Oxford University Press for their patience and sustained interest in steering this work to final publication. I am also grateful to Jaroslav Synek of the Czech Academy of Sciences for his unfailing help and generosity in drawing the maps, to The Society of Authors Authors' Foundation for the award of a grant during the final stages of revision, and to the director and fellows of the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, for the opportunity to complete this volume there as a visiting scholar during the summer of 2016.

Abbreviations

CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina, Turnhout, 1952–.
CDB	<i>Codice diplomatico del monastero di S. Colombano di Bobbio fino all'anno MCCVIII</i> , edited by Carlo Cipolla. <i>Fonti per la storia d'Italia</i> 52, 2 vols. Rome, 1918, vol. 1.
CLA	<i>Codices Latini antiquiores: A Palaeographical Guide to Latin Manuscripts prior to the Ninth Century</i> , edited by E. A. Lowe, 11 vols. plus supplement. Oxford: Clarendon, 1935–1971.
<i>Diplomata</i>	<i>Diplomata, chartae, epistolae, leges aliaque instrumenta ad res Gallo-Francicas spectantia</i> , edited by J. M. Pardessus, 2 vols. Paris, 1843–1849, vol. 2.
DLH	Gregory of Tours, <i>Decem libri historiarum</i> , edited by Bruno Krusch and Wilhelm Levison. MGH, <i>Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum</i> 1/1, Hanover, 1937. English trans. by Lewis Thorpe, <i>Gregory of Tours: The History of the Franks</i> , Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 1974.
<i>Ep.</i>	Columbanus's <i>Epistolae</i> . In <i>Sancti Columbani Opera</i> , edited by G. S. M. Walker. <i>Scriptores Latini Hiberniae</i> II, Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1970, 2–58.
Fredegar	<i>The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar</i> , edited and translated by J. M. Wallace-Hadrill. London: Nelson, 1960.

- Gregory the Great, *Ep.* *S. Gregorii magni opera. Registrum epistularum: Libri 1–7, 8–14*, edited by Dag Norberg, 2 vols. Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 140–140 A, Turnhout: Brepols, 1982. Translated into English and annotated by John R. C. Martyn, *The Letters of Gregory the Great*, 3 vols., Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2004.
- HL* *Pauli Historia Langobardorum*, edited by Georg Waitz. MGH, *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi*, Hanover, 1878. Translated into English and annotated by W. D. Foulke, *Paul the Deacon, History of the Lombards*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003.
- Instructio* Columbanus's *Instructiones*. In *Sancti Columbani Opera*, edited by G. S. M. Walker. *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae II*, Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1970, 60–120.
- MGH* Monumenta Germaniae Historica.
- Paenitentiale* Columbanus's *Penitential*. In *Sancti Columbani Opera*, edited by G. S. M. Walker. *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae II*, Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1970, 168–180.
- PL* *Patrologia Latina Cursus Completus, series latina*, edited by J. P. Migne, 221 vols. Paris, 1844–1866.
- RB* *Regula Benedicti*.
- RC* *Regula Columbani*.
- RCoen.* *Regula coenobialis*. In *Sancti Columbani Opera*, edited by G. S. M. Walker. *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae II*, Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1970, 142–168.
- RM* *Regula monachorum*. In *Sancti Columbani Opera*, edited by G. S. M. Walker. *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae II*, Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1970, 122–142.
- SCO* *Sancti Columbani Opera*, edited by G. S. M. Walker. *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae II*, Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1970.
- VC* *Vita Columbani abbatis et discipulorumque eius*. In *Ionae Vitae Sanctorum Columbani, Vedastis, Iohannis*, edited by Bruno Krusch. MGH, *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi*, Hanover and Leipzig, 1905, 144–294. Translation and commentary in Alexander O'Hara and Ian Wood, eds., *Jonas of Bobbio: Life of Columbanus, Life of John of Réomé, and Life of Vedast*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017, 85–239.

- VJ *Vita Iohannis abbatis Reomaensis*. In *Ionae Vitae Sanctorum Columbani, Vedastis, Iohannis*, edited by Bruno Krusch. MGH, *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi*, Hanover and Leipzig, 1905, 326–344. Translation and commentary in Alexander O’Hara and Ian Wood, eds., *Jonas of Bobbio: Life of Columbanus, Life of John of Réomé, and Life of Vedast*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017, 240–264.
- VPJ *Vita patrum Jurensium* = *Vie des pères du Jura*, edited by F. Martine, SC 142. Paris: Le Cerf, 1988. *The Life of the Jura Fathers*, translated by Tim Vivian, Kim Vivian, and Jeffrey Burton Russell. Cistercian Studies 178, Kalamazoo, 1999.
- VV *Vita Vedastis episcopi Atrebatensis*. In *Ionae Vitae Sanctorum Columbani, Vedastis, Iohannis*, edited by Bruno Krusch. MGH, *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi*, Hanover and Leipzig, 1905, 309–320. Translation and commentary in Alexander O’Hara and Ian Wood, eds., *Jonas of Bobbio: Life of Columbanus, Life of John of Réomé, and Life of Vedast*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017, 265–277.

Introduction: Reading Jonas

IN NOVEMBER 659, ABBOT JONAS BROKE HIS JOURNEY SOUTH TO Chalon-sur-Saône at the old Gallic monastery of Réomé in Burgundy.¹ He had been summoned to the royal court by Balthild, who was once an Anglo-Saxon slave and was now a Frankish queen and regent for her seven-year-old son Chlothar III (r. 657–673).² The reason for the meeting with Balthild is not known, but it must have been a matter of some importance for the queen to have summoned the abbot in midwinter. Jonas was weary and decided to rest for a few days at Réomé before continuing his journey.³ He may have known the abbot of Réomé, Chunna, who had been a monk at Luxeuil, a community farther east in Burgundy with which Jonas had connections.⁴ Chunna and the community asked their guest to write a Life of John, a Gallo-Roman monk and abbot who had founded the monastery in the mid-fifth century.⁵

Jonas's reputation as a skilled writer of saints' Lives must have been known to the community. In turning to the life of the monastery's founder, Jonas looked back to the golden age of Gallic monasticism, to the great island monastery of Lérins, and to the vibrant monasticism of the Rhône valley and southern Gaul.⁶ For him, John represented the archetype of the ascetic abbot in the mold of the Egyptian monastic pioneer, Saint Antony, a humble and simple man who had retreated from the world and was wary of exercising authority over others.⁷ In the tradition of Gallic monasticism that stretched back to John Cassian and the desert monks of Egypt, Jonas identified the ideal type of monastic life, which he presented to the community of Réomé for their contemplation and imitation.⁸

1. Now Moutiers-Saint-Jean. For the following, see the preface to *VJ*.

2. On Balthild as queen and monastic patron: Nelson 1986; Ewig 1973; Fox 2014, 39–43. Our main source for Balthild, the contemporary *Vita Balthildis*, is translated in Fouracre and Gerberding 1996, 97–132.

3. *paucis diebus inibi pro labore itineris quievit*: *VJ* preface, 326.

4. Chunna appears as a member of Luxeuil in *Vita Germani* 6. See also Fox 2014, 97–98.

5. Moutiers-St-Jean, *Lexikon des Mittelalters* 6; Marilier 1951 discusses the community's links with the Columbanian movement; Dubreucq 2009, 210–212, notes that these connections can be overstated. On the *VJ*, see O'Hara and Wood 2017; Diem 2008.

6. Jonas links John to the monastery of Lérins and its traditions in *VJ* 4–5. For a succinct overview of Gallic monasticism prior to Columbanus see Fox 2014, 2–9; Wood 1981; Pricoco 1978.

7. On the parallels with the *Vita Antonii*: Diem 2008, 22–25.

8. See esp. *VJ* 16, 18.

By the time Jonas was writing, John's "small world" of self-consciously marginal, small, and relatively poor monasteries had been transformed.⁹ As Robert Markus remarked: "The ascetic ideology had moved from the fringes of society to its centre. From institutionalized alienation the monastery had turned into focused representation of the community's social ideal."¹⁰ Vast amounts of wealth and land now flowed into new monasteries that were being built all over the northern and eastern parts of the Merovingian kingdom, away from the traditional southern heartlands of Gallic monasticism. A *nouvelle vague* of monastic foundation and elite patronage was revolutionizing monasticism and its relationship to society.¹¹ The large-scale transfer of wealth and land to religious institutions and the development of a "ritual economy" from the sixth century onward marked an important and decisive shift from Late Antiquity to the world of the Middle Ages.¹² In return for praying for the salvation of their souls (*pro remedio animae*), wealthy lay donors, the Merovingian kings, and their new warrior aristocracy bequeathed large amounts of their land and resources to found monasteries: to store up treasure in heaven.¹³ When these elite patrons died, many of them and their descendants chose to be buried in the monasteries they had established. These monasteries in turn became guardians of family memory.¹⁴ As these monasteries were privileged, independent units free from royal or episcopal control—the "tax-free" havens of their day—some astute families also sought to control their family property by maneuvering family members into leadership positions within the community.¹⁵ These monasteries were increasingly drawn into the factional politics and competition for power of the later Merovingian period. They became more central to the exercise and discourse of elite power and identity.¹⁶

Jonas of Bobbio is one of our principal voices and witnesses of this cultural, socioeconomic, political, and religious revolution. He was writing when new ideas of Christian authority, morality, and theology were converging in new ways.¹⁷ The Frankish kingdom had by this time emerged as the most powerful

9. On notions of monastic poverty, see Brown 2012, 414–419; on the changing profile of Western monasticism at this time, see the overviews in Brown 2003, 219–231; Dunn 2000, 82–110.

10. Markus 1990, 214.

11. The seminal works are still Prinz 1965, 1981. Innes 2007, 290–297, provides an excellent summary. Fox 2014 substantially builds and expands on Prinz's work and explores the aristocratic networks in detail.

12. On these transformations from cultural, religious, and economic perspectives, see Brown 2003, 246–266; 2015, 181–211; Hodges 2012, 67–90; Wood 2013.

13. Based on Matt. 6: 19–21. On the dynamics of this reciprocity, see Angenendt 2008; Head 2008; Brown 2015.

14. Fox 2014, 139–194; Effros 2002.

15. Fox 2014, 195–218; Tatum 2007.

16. Fox 2014; Hummer 2005; Le Jan 2001, 1995.

17. Brown 2015, 1999; Kreiner 2014b.

and dynamic of the post-Roman successor states.¹⁸ New trade routes and emporia were developing in northern Europe, while monasteries became economic hubs in their own right, with more resources to invest in cultural and artisanal production.¹⁹ Contacts with the Eastern Roman Empire in Constantinople continued as the Merovingian kings pursued a strategy in collaboration with their imperial counterparts to extend their control and influence on the borders of their kingdom through missionary and military means.²⁰ One of these areas was in the northeast of the kingdom, in the flat, marshy terrain of the Scarpe and Scheldt river basins. This was where Jonas was based and from where he probably set out on his journey south to Réomé and Chalon.²¹ In the late 630s, he had first come to this region from his monastic community of Bobbio in Lombard Italy to assist Bishop Amandus.

The monks of Réomé commissioned Jonas to write the *Life of John* (VJ) because he was already known as a writer of the Lives of the saints—the most popular genre of Christian literature at this time.²² While working as a missionary with Bishop Amandus, he had written his most ambitious work, the *Life of Columbanus and His Disciples* (VC), between 639 and 642.²³ This complex work in two books focused on the Irish abbot and monastic founder Columbanus (c. 550–615) and on his Frankish successors and communities in the period after the saint's death. It is a substantial work of hagiography, running to 150 pages in the standard edition published by the Monumenta Germaniae Historica.²⁴ The first book (chapters 1–30) relates the saintly biography of Columbanus, his travels on the Continent, and the trials he endured as a headstrong holy man. From one point of view, it can be read as an *itinerarium* of a holy man and monastic founder in Western Europe in the last decade of the sixth century and the first decades of the seventh century, similar to the travel account of the Chinese Buddhist monk Xuanzang (c. 602–664), who journeyed from China to India in the same period.²⁵ The second book (chapters 1–25) continues the story by

18. For surveys of the Merovingian kingdoms, see Wood 1994c; Geary 1988; Ewig 1988; Fouracre 2005; Wickham 2009a, 111–129.

19. Lebecq 1997, 2000; Dell'Acqua 2011.

20. See Esders 2016.

21. On Jonas's activity in this area and his connection with the abbey of Marchiennes, see chapter 4 for further discussion.

22. For an overview of Merovingian hagiography, see the survey article in Kreiner forthcoming, with further references.

23. All of Jonas's saints' Lives are now translated with comprehensive commentary in O'Hara and Wood 2017.

24. This is the 1905 edition by Bruno Krusch, published as *Ionae Vitae Sanctorum*.

25. His work *Great Tang Records on the Western Regions*, completed in 646, is one of the primary sources for the study of medieval Central Asia and India. I am grateful to Ronan Farrell for discussion and correspondence on this topic.

focusing on Columbanus's successors and communities up to the time when Jonas was writing in the early 640s. As well as being our principal source for the biography of Columbanus, the *Life* is a kind of hagiographical history that charts the expansion and conflicts within the Columbanian communities of the first half of the seventh century. Columbanus's fierce insistence on the independence of his monasteries from episcopal and lay control and on the strict regulation of sacred space provided a model of monastic foundation that his successors and their elite patrons were keen to adapt and exploit. This model was successful because it complemented broader social and theological trends that came from the laity, who increasingly sought to invest in the Church for spiritual reasons and who wanted religious specialists who were markedly different from the secular clergy.²⁶ Monasteries became powerhouses of intercessory prayer, where ritual specialists, both monks and nuns, sought to advance not only their own salvation but also that of their patrons and society at large.²⁷ This changing function of Western monasticism and its relationship with secular power was not without tension, as we shall see.

A corollary of this new symbiotic relationship between monasteries and secular authority was a renewed engagement in Christianization and with missionary activity on the fringes of the Merovingian kingdom, which went hand in hand with the expansion of ecclesiastical and secular Frankish power.²⁸ Jonas was actively engaged in this field with Amandus, a missionary bishop influenced by the papacy and Columbanian ideals, who had close ties to the Merovingian court of Dagobert I (r. 629–39). Backed by royal authority, Amandus extended monastic and ecclesiastical structures in the northeast of the kingdom, in the area around Arras, Elnone (now Saint-Amand-les-Eaux), and north toward Ghent in Flanders.²⁹ Many of the new bishops in this region had been Columbanian monks of Luxeuil and, like Amandus, had close connections to the Merovingian court.³⁰ One of them, Bishop Autbert of Cambrai-Arras, probably commissioned Jonas to write a *Life* of his episcopal predecessor, the first bishop of Arras, Vedast (d. c. 540), who was accredited with a role in Clovis's

26. Brown 2012, 516; O'Hara forthcoming.

27. On the role of intercessory prayer, see Diem 2005; Brown 2015, 196–197; Diem 2013, with further references.

28. The classic study is Fritze 1969; see also Werner 1976; von Padberg 1995; van Egmond 2000; Mériaux 2002, 2006a.

29. On the work of Amandus, see Esders 2016; Wood 2001b, 39–42; Fox 2014, 118–132, with further references. The earliest *Vita Amandi prima* is translated in Hillgarth 1986, 139–148.

30. Jonas names them specifically in VC 2.8. On these Columbanian bishops, see Prinz 1965, 123; Hen 2007, 94–123.

conversion and the early Christianization of the Franks. As in the *Life of John*, Jonas looked to the distant past to present a model of the ideal bishop for the Columbanian monk-bishops of his own day. The *Life of Vedast* (VV) consists of ten brief chapters and, at ten pages in the edition, is the shortest of Jonas's saints' Lives. While Jonas's authorship of this text has been contested, there are compelling reasons for attributing the work to him.³¹

In addition to the three saints' Lives, Jonas's authorship has now been attributed to an anonymous rule for nuns known as the *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines*. This was previously attributed to the third abbot of Luxeuil, Waldebert (r. 629–670), and it was thought to have been the Rule in use at the convent of Eboriac (Faremoutiers), which is one of the communities that features prominently in the second part of the VC.³² The Rule is a lengthy and detailed work of monastic legislation for a community of nuns that combines elements from the Rules of Columbanus and Benedict. It is an important early witness to the dissemination of the sixth-century Italian *Rule of Benedict* (*Regula Benedicti*, RB) in Western Europe and has important implications for our understanding of Jonas and his hagiography.³³

Because of Jonas's florid and difficult Merovingian Latin, the full range of his hagiography has only been accessible to the competent Latinist until now. He is not an easy author to read, especially on a first or cursory reading. As with Gregory of Tours's labyrinthine *Ten Books of History*, it is not always easy to know what Jonas is up to.³⁴ Most readers, both medieval and modern, rarely read past Book 1 of the VC. This book seeks to go further and to provide the first comprehensive study of Jonas of Bobbio and his hagiography. It seeks to trace the main features and concerns of Jonas's works by reading them with their historical context in mind.

When Jonas came to write his saints' Lives in the mid-seventh century, this genre of Christian literature was already some three hundred years old.³⁵ He was

31. Jonas's authorship of the VV was first proposed by Bruno Krusch in 1893 and has recently been contested by Anne-Marie Helvétius in 2011. See the comments in O'Hara and Wood 2017.

32. A new critical edition and translation is in preparation by Albrecht Diem. See Diem 2003, 2007b, 2011a, for a preliminary edition and studies; Diem 2016a; Diem and van der Meer 2016 for a German translation. A French translation and discussion of the Rule by Lazare de Seilhac can be found in *Règles monastiques au féminin* under the title *Règle de Walbert*, 45–95. For the proposed authorship of Abbot Waldebert, see de Vogüé 1988b, 33.

33. On the early dissemination of the RB in conjunction with Columbanian Rules, see Ó Cróinín 2005b.

34. On Gregory of Tours and the manifold interpretations of his major work of historiography, see Goffart 1988, chap. 3; Heinzlmann 2001; the contributions in Mitchell and Wood 2002; Wood 1994b; Reimitz 2015.

35. On the development of hagiographical writing, see Rapp 2010; Heffernan 1988; the overview in Head 2001, xiii–xxviii; Barnes 2010, with a more extensive bibliography.

writing in an established tradition, and he was well versed in the classics of this genre. Jonas did not write in a vacuum, and neither do I. A considerable body of scholarship exists on Jonas and his hagiography, which is the foundation on which this book builds and to which I am indebted. In order to orient the reader regarding this scholarship and the ways in which Jonas has been read by other scholars, I will provide an overview of the literature and identify some of the key debates before concluding with some avenues of inquiry that I will explore in the following chapters. The chronological overview of the literature is confined to works published from 1965 to 2015 that specifically deal with or are relevant to Jonas of Bobbio.

READING JONAS: HISTORIOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVES

The breakthrough studies that would influence the next fifty years of scholarship in this field were published in 1965 in two seminal works in German: František Graus's *Volk, Herrscher und Heiliger im Reich der Merowinger* and Friedrich Prinz's *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich*.³⁶ Graus's study of Merovingian hagiography as a source for the social history of the Frankish kingdoms showed how a historian could use hagiography not only for the study of religion but also for the study of social values. This was a methodological departure from previous scholarship and made hagiography a serious subject of research for historians. Surprisingly, Graus did not use Jonas of Bobbio's VC in his study, perhaps because he did not consider it a work of Merovingian hagiography.³⁷ Prinz's equally groundbreaking work traced the development of monasticism in Gaul and the Frankish kingdoms from the fourth to the eighth centuries. The role of the Irish and Columbanus in particular on Continental monasticism had been much debated during the twentieth century.³⁸ Since Prinz, it has been acknowledged that the influence of the Irish monks was considerable but that it was also a hybrid movement that consisted of members of diverse ethnic backgrounds.³⁹ While the founding cohort of twelve monks came from Ireland, it was not predominantly or exclusively an Irish phenomenon.

To describe the movement by which more than one hundred monasteries with links to Luxeuil were founded in Merovingian Gaul between 590 and 730,

36. Graus 1965; Prinz 1965.

37. Noted by Wood 1982, 63 n. 3.

38. For orientation on the main debates, see Duft 1956; Enright 1994; Wood 2015.

39. On the influence of Ireland and the Irish in Europe, see the contributions in the Spoleto volume from 2010, *L'Irlanda e gli Irlandesi nell'alto Medioevo*, and the important series of volumes published in the 1980s by Klett-Cotta and edited by Próinséas Ní Chatháin and Michael Richter on *Die Iren und Europa im frühen Mittelalter*. For a recent reassessment, see Wood 2015.

Prinz coined the term “Hiberno-Frankish” (sometimes “Iro-Frankish”), which has since been widely used to refer to the monasticism of seventh-century Merovingian Gaul (see map 1).⁴⁰ It is now agreed that there was considerable variation—both regional and over time—within Hiberno-Frankish monasticism.⁴¹ This was not a monolithic movement but rather distinct monastic traditions that developed from the reciprocal relations between Irish monastic founders and their Frankish patrons and successors and that changed over time and region. It is important to note that Prinz’s model of Hiberno-Frankish monasticism also encompassed other Irish monastic founders such as Fursey (d. 650), who were also active in Gaul and whose communities were distinct from the Columbanian-Luxeuil circle.⁴² Prinz did not study the hagiography of this movement in as much detail, although in a later study, he associated the hagiography and monasticism of the Luxeuil circle with the development of the family monastery (*Eigenkloster*) and the process of aristocratic self-sanctification (*Adelsheiligkeit*) which he saw as emerging in the seventh century.⁴³

In this book, I use the term “Columbanian” (for lack of a better alternative) to describe an elite social group that included the courtiers of the Neustrian regime of Chlothar II and his successors, the monastic communities of Luxeuil and Bobbio, and affiliated communities and benefactors. I shall use the term primarily to describe a network of monastic associates and their patrons who were, at least initially and despite conflicts, united by common religious ideals strongly influenced by Columbanus and his successors and which lasted until the third quarter of the seventh century. This does not presuppose a coherent movement and uniformity in practice over time but acknowledges the role of Columbanus as a catalyst in the formation of this core social group through the relationships he established with Chlothar II and a group of prominent Frankish aristocratic families, which were continued and expanded by his Frankish successors.⁴⁴

The seminal works of Graus and Prinz set the stage for a renewed engagement by historians with hagiography as a valuable source for social history and with studying the vibrant interrelationship between monastic groups and secular authorities in the Frankish kingdoms.⁴⁵ These avenues of research would filter into new studies focusing on Columbanus and Jonas of Bobbio. While

40. Prinz 1965. On the number of monasteries, see Prinz 1981, 77; Atsma 1976, 168.

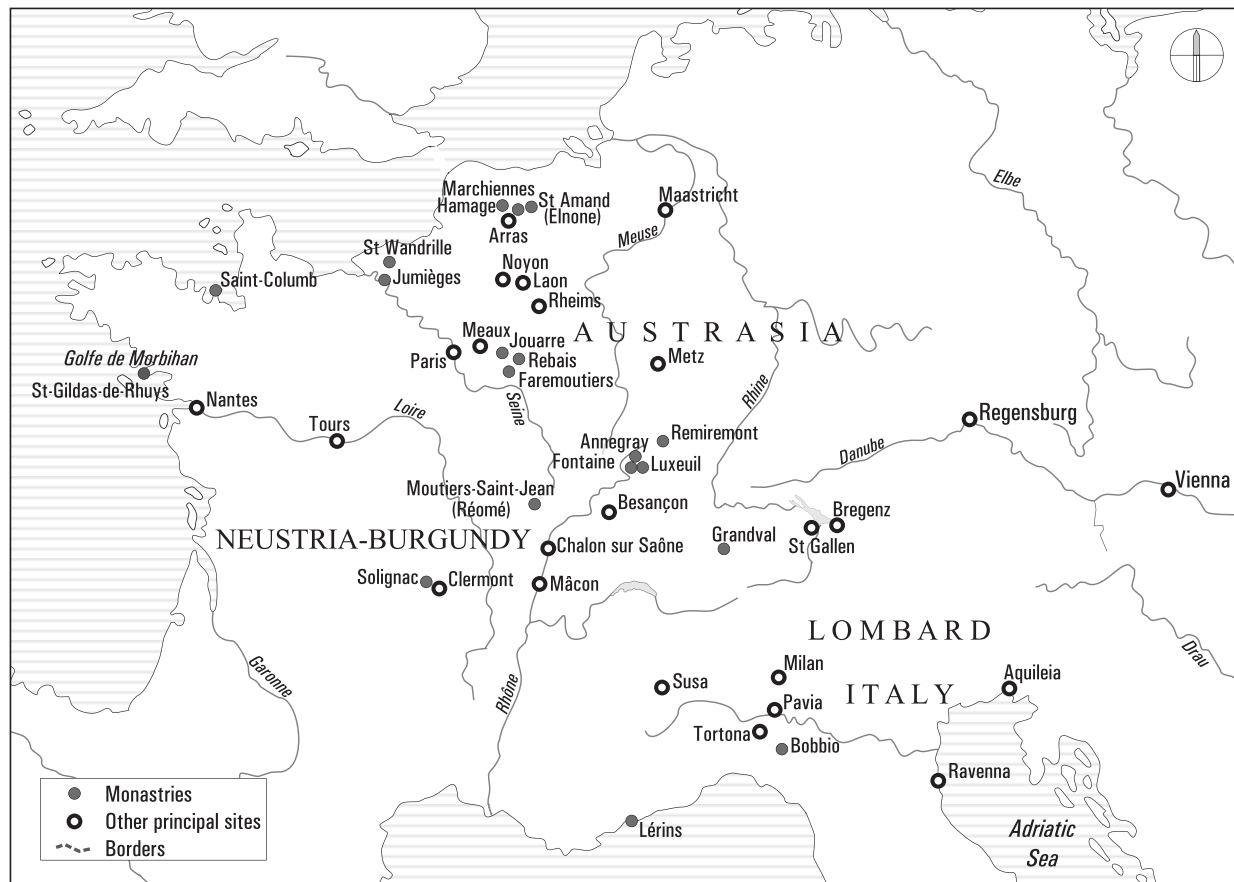
41. Wood 1982, 1994c; Charles-Edwards 2000.

42. Fox 2014, 15–16; Wood 2015.

43. Prinz 1967, 1975.

44. On defining “Columbanian,” see Fox 2014, 15–16. Rosenwein 2006, 130, has highlighted the importance of Columbanus for the formation of the emotional norms of this elite community.

45. On the shifting trends in the use of hagiography by historians, see Smith 1992; Lifshitz 1994; Geary 1994; Wood 1999.



Map 1. The world of Jonas of Bobbio.

some studies on Jonas and his hagiography were published before this time, notably by James Wilson in 1951, who highlighted the silences and omissions in Jonas's VC and in the collected volume (in which Wilson's essay is found), published following the Luxeuil conference of 1950,⁴⁶ it is to the mid-1960s that the principal scholarship and trends in this field can be traced.

Prinz's influence is discernible in Serafino Prete's 1968 Italian article considering Jonas's sources and the miracle accounts. Prete's focus is on Book 1, which he saw as reflecting two bodies of tradition, one Hiberno-Frankish and the other Italian. Book 2 is not studied because it is of less interest. For Prete, Jonas used distinct oral traditions from Columbanus's Frankish foundations and from Bobbio in writing the accounts of Columbanus's miracles in Book 1. In his view, the Hiberno-Frankish traditions provided Jonas with a richer repository of miracle stories than the more restrained traditions of Bobbio. Prete's positivist and more traditional approach in reading miracle accounts is evident in his statement that the presence of miracle accounts presents a "problem" and in his attempt to distinguish the method of transmission for these miracle stories.⁴⁷ He seeks to distinguish the varying extent to which Jonas relied on oral tradition, hagiographical precedent, or an existing dossier of miracle accounts which he drew upon and embellished in Book 1. Jonas thus appears to be an objective reporter who drew upon living traditions and whose veracity is taken for granted. Prete is aware of the forms and traditions in hagiographical writing and discusses some of the hagiographical sources that Jonas knew but did not copy pedantically. He sees Jonas as an important bridge figure between the Christian authors of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages.⁴⁸

Jonas's importance as a skilled author and as a witness to the transitional period from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages is also highlighted in Gilles Roques's 1971 exhaustive study on Jonas's Latin. Roques's detailed analysis of Jonas's language, which he sees as being stylistically quite close to that of the classical historians Sallust and Suetonius, confirms the literary quality of Jonas's work.⁴⁹ While Jonas cannot be seen as representative of the spoken language of Italy in the seventh century, Jonas's knowledge of classical authors such as Cicero, Ovid, Virgil, Livy, and others shows that schools of considerable culture continued to exist in some regions, notably at Susa, where Jonas grew up.⁵⁰

46. Wilson 1951. Also worth noting are Jarrot 1897; Metlake 1913; Concannon 1950. A list of the earlier literature is provided in Kenney 1997, 203. This is, of course, not taking into account the editions and studies of Jonas's *vitae* by Bruno Krusch, which were seminal and which we discuss further in this book.

47. Prete 1968, 97.

48. Prete 1968, 111.

49. Roques 1971, 19.

50. Roques 1971, 52.

The emphasis on Book 1 is again apparent as Roques based his study on his French PhD thesis, which was a new edition and study of Book 1 using the ninth-century Metz manuscript, which was unknown to Bruno Krusch at the time of his 1905 edition.⁵¹ Roques is complimentary about the quality and usefulness of Krusch's edition. The oldest witness, an earlier manuscript from the ninth century, St Gallen 553, which Krusch took as the base text for his edition, is in Roques's opinion still the best exemplar of all the manuscripts.⁵² But certain characteristics of the variants made Roques identify three families of manuscript traditions which remained distinct up to the middle of the eleventh century. The first family or group of manuscripts originated in eastern France, in the region of Verdun and Metz, the second in northern Italy, and the third perhaps in St Gallen, which was the version current throughout the rest of France and in England. Roques based his edition on the witnesses he identified as the most representative of each of these families.⁵³ While Roques praised Krusch's edition, his PhD work provided an updated edition of Book 1 that took into account the variants of the Metz manuscript and the first systematic linguistic analysis of Jonas's Latin. In response to Roques's article, in 1974, the Latinist Bengt Löfstedt queried whether a new edition was in fact needed (he thought not) and provided additional analysis of aspects of Jonas's Latin.⁵⁴

While Roques and others acknowledged Jonas's work as being of great historical importance for the period from 590 to 640 in terms of both its literary and its linguistic merits, the German scholar Franz Brunhölzl expressed reservations about using the VC as a historical source. In his survey of Latin literature, Brunhölzl drew attention to the important influence of the works of Sulpicius Severus on Jonas and also to the fact that although Jonas wrote in Gaul, he did not follow the examples of Merovingian hagiography.⁵⁵ In contrast to the observations of the eminent Latinists Christine Mohrmann and Dag Norberg, who both highlighted the influence of Hiberno-Latin on Jonas's style,⁵⁶ Brunhölzl does not see Jonas within the context of the Irish tradition.⁵⁷ Jonas's Latin is a mix of popular vulgar usage and high literary qualities. Book 1

51. Roques 1972.

52. Roques 1971, 7.

53. Roques 1971, 7–8.

54. Löfstedt 1974, 79–80. I share Löfstedt's opinion that a new edition is not necessary and that St Gallen 553 is a superior witness to the Metz manuscript. The translation by O'Hara and Wood 2017 takes into account the variant readings of the Metz manuscript and has a fuller discussion of the manuscript tradition. A new edition is in preparation by Alain Dubreucq for the Sources Chrésiennes series.

55. Brunhölzl 1975, 188.

56. Mohrmann 1962, 230; Norberg 1958, 489–90. See Breen 2011, 16–17, on Jonas's knowledge of insular liturgical tradition.

57. Brunhölzl 1975, 187.

is again the focus of study, as Brunhölzl considered Book 2 to be of lesser literary quality. Jonas's other works on Vedast and John are likewise ignored because they do not match up to the mastery of Book 1 of the VC.⁵⁸

The scholarship shifted during the 1980s from philological studies on Jonas's Latin and his importance within the literary tradition of the Early Middle Ages to a deepening awareness of his intentions and limitations. Ian Wood's 1982 article is presented as the first real attempt to evaluate Jonas's intentions and achievement since Krusch's editions.⁵⁹ As in his survey of Burgundian monasticism before Columbanus published the year previously, where he argued that the division between earlier Gallic monasticism in the Rhône valley and that initiated by Columbanus is often exaggerated,⁶⁰ Wood takes a similar continuity line in his article on Jonas. While drawing attention to the limitations of the VC and to Jonas's omissions and their significance, Wood argues that Jonas was not breaking new ground in Merovingian hagiography.⁶¹ There is much that connects Jonas's work with older traditions of hagiographical writing in Gaul, as Wood points out. Jonas's collective biographies share much in common, for example, with the early-sixth-century *Life of the Jura Fathers*, which can be read as a narrative illustrating the monastic norms at the time in the Jura monasteries—"the Rule in action."⁶² From this perspective, Jonas's miracle accounts can be read not from the perspective of an objective reporter but from that of a skilled author who used miracles to illustrate examples of monastic virtues (such as obedience) and vices (such as rebellion). Wood carefully probes deeper into the underlying structure and intention behind Jonas's work, seeing the work as primarily intended for ascetics (not the laity) and for a small circle of readers confined mainly to Burgundy.⁶³ He plays down the cultural differences between Columbanus and his contemporaries in Gaul, while stressing the variety within Hiberno-Frankish monasticism.⁶⁴ For Wood, Jonas's interest was primarily "with the ascetic traditions and standards of a specific group of monasteries."⁶⁵ Wood's article signaled a greater interest of scholars in understanding Jonas's work as a hagiographer and the motivations underlying the writing of the VC.

58. Brunhölzl 1975, 189–190.

59. Wood 1982, 63.

60. Wood 1981, 3.

61. Wood 1982, 64.

62. Wood 1982, 66–68. See the *VPJ* entry in my references list for an edition and translation of this important work of Gallic hagiography. I discuss the *VPJ* in relation to Jonas's hagiography in more detail in chapter 4. On the Jura monasteries, see Fox 2014, 5–6, with further references.

63. Wood 1982, 70.

64. Wood 1982, 69–70.

65. Wood 1982, 80.

In 1988, Walter Berschin raised doubts over Krusch's reconstruction of the text.⁶⁶ Berschin noted that Krusch's reconstruction of the text is not found in a single manuscript. The complicated manuscript transmission of Book 2 suggested to Berschin that the text may never have been transmitted in the form in which Krusch published it.⁶⁷ The unusual two-book structure of the *Life* may have been inspired by the biblical model of the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, traditionally ascribed to the evangelist.⁶⁸ Berschin also considers aspects of Jonas's Latin style, the sources he drew on (including a study on the influence of Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* on Jonas by Renate Vogeler)⁶⁹ and the strong historical element in Jonas's work. Jonas is seen more as a historian of a religious movement than as a biographer,⁷⁰ the successor to his sixth-century Italian compatriot Venantius Fortunatus who was also an accomplished hagiographer.⁷¹ While the VC may have been the most widely read text of the seventh century,⁷² Jonas's other saints' Lives are seen as less inventive.⁷³

The career of Jonas was the subject of an Italian article published in the same year as Berschin's, in which Ileana Pagani, an Italian Latinist and literary scholar, queried the seventeenth-century Benedictine scholar Jean Mabillon's identification of Jonas with a certain Jonatus, first abbot of Marchiennes, who was active at the same time and in the same region as Jonas. Despite the strong chronological, geographical, and monastic overlaps that make a strong case for Mabillon's identification, Pagani dismissed these on the grounds that some of the evidence comes from later sources from the tenth century. However, both Ian Wood and the Benedictine scholar Adalbert de Vogüé appear to have accepted Mabillon's hypothesis.⁷⁴

De Vogüé's French translation of the VC in 1988 provided the first complete translation of the *Life*.⁷⁵ De Vogüé's careful reading of the *Life* highlighted the breadth of sources Jonas used and his skill as a hagiographer. He accepted Krusch's reconstruction of the text while taking into account the readings of the Metz manuscript. His long article "En lisant Jonas de Bobbio," published in the same year, was intended as a companion piece to his translation, where he

66. Berschin 1988a, 41 n. 97.

67. Berschin 1988a, 27 n. 59, 38.

68. Berschin 1988a, 28.

69. See the work of Renate Vogeler in Berschin 1988a, 43–48.

70. Berschin 1988a, 37.

71. Berschin 1988: 41.

72. Berschin 1988a, 38.

73. Berschin 1988a, 41.

74. Pagani 1988; Wood 1982, 63 n. 3; de Vogüé 1988b, 22.

75. De Vogüé 1988b. Partial, inaccurate translations were available before this time, but de Vogüé provided the first translation of the entire work.

provided more extensive notes and commentary with particular emphasis on the terminology used by Jonas.⁷⁶

The historical value of the *VC* and Jonas's treatment of miracles features again in a 1995 article by Christian Rohr. Rohr tries to distinguish between historical and hagiographical elements in the work while, following the methodology of Graus, seeing it as a valuable source for social history.⁷⁷ He assumed that because Jonas styled himself Jonas *peccator* in his letter to the abbots that prefaces the work, he was not an abbot at the time of writing the *VC*.⁷⁸ There is no reason to assume this, however, as Columbanus referred to himself as *peccator* in his letters even though he was an abbot. Rohr does not agree with the identification with Jonatus but rather thinks that Jonas was an abbot in the service of the royal court, which was also the opinion of Krusch.⁷⁹ He provides a statistical analysis of miracle accounts in Book 1 and their function, reading them for what they can tell us about social history. In terms of the structure of Book 2, Rohr is unsure. He suggests that the sections in Book 2 on Athala (chapters 1–6), Eustasius (chapters 7–10), and Bertulf (chapter 23) may have formed part of the original work, while the Faremoutiers section (chapters 11–22) and the final two chapters on the Bobbio monks (chapters 24–25) may have been added later. He also suggests, following Berschin, that different versions of the *Life* may have circulated in different Columbanian monasteries.⁸⁰

The context in which the *VC* was written and aspects of source criticism are topics that Wood returns to in two studies published in 1994 and 1998. In his book on the Merovingian kingdoms, Wood considers Jonas's silences and errors in the *VC* within the context of the political developments in the kingdom post-613 with the rise to power of the Neustrian king, Chlothar II (r. 613–629), after he had defeated rival branches of the Merovingian dynasty and had united the three kingdoms. The political context provides insights into why Jonas obscured or misinterpreted events from Columbanus's career. Wood sees Jonas as voicing the concerns of the second generation of monks and responding to changes in the monastic lifestyle of the communities in order to give the impression of seamless continuity since Columbanus's day, where in fact there had been considerable change. For Wood, it was not the monasticism of Columbanus that Jonas described but rather that of his successors.⁸¹ He sees Jonas as influenced

76. De Vogüé 1988a.

77. Rohr 1995, 235, 258.

78. Rohr 1995, 233.

79. Rohr 1995, 234, citing Krusch 1893, 388. Prinz 1965, 273 n. 30, also doubted that Jonas should be associated with Jonatus, abbot of Marchiennes.

80. Rohr 1995, 242–244.

81. Wood 1994c, 197.

by his contemporary audience's concern for monastic exemption and immunity rather than as a natural development of Columbanus's position with regard to monastic exemption from external authority. These aspects are explored in further detail in his 1998 contribution to the *Festschrift* for Walter Goffart, whose seminal work *The Narrators of Barbarian History*, published in 1988, showed what was methodologically possible in deconstructing early medieval texts and their contexts.⁸² In this article, Wood looked at which issues affected Jonas at the time of writing, highlighting specifically the importance for Jonas of issues relating to monastic independence and the granting of immunities. He showed how Jonas's *VC* conformed to the political propaganda of the Neustrian court.⁸³ Luxeuil's endorsement of Jonas's account suggests that it played an active part in promulgating an inaccurate version of events that fitted with the current Neustrian regime.⁸⁴ Again, Wood downplays Columbanus's influence by suggesting that the concern for monastic liberty that can be seen from the papal and episcopal concessions granted to monastic communities in the mid-seventh century was not a development from Columbanus's concern for monastic liberty but rather a new development of the second generation.⁸⁵ He sees a correlation between Jonas's interests in the *VC* and the interests of those who wanted to secure episcopal exemptions.⁸⁶ Following Berschin, Wood also expresses doubts about whether Jonas intended Book 2 to be disseminated in its entirety.⁸⁷ Wood also contrasts the foundation narratives in Jonas and the differences in representation between Columbanus's foundations. Unsurprisingly, Bobbio (Jonas's own community) comes out best, but Jonas's reasons for giving preeminence to Bobbio are not explored. This is also the case with Jonas's attempt to portray Columbanian tradition as unchanging; the question of why Jonas felt the need to do this is not addressed.

This question is addressed in Clare Stancliffe's contribution from 2001, in which she argues that Jonas sought to appease opposing factions within the Columbanian movement and to present a version of events that could appeal to all parties. For Stancliffe, the *VC* sought "to forge an identity for the modified Columbanian monasticism of Jonas's day, while still preserving its links with their founder, whom it honoured in exemplary fashion."⁸⁸ The dissensions

82. Goffart 1988.

83. Wood 1998, 112.

84. Wood 1998, 110.

85. Wood 1998, 119. On the development of monastic exemptions and notions of immunity at this time, see Rosenwein 1999, 2002; Fouracre 1995; Murray 1994.

86. Wood 1998, 119–120.

87. Wood 1998, 101.

88. Stancliffe 2001, 220.

within the Columbanian *familia* could not be ignored but needed to be addressed. This was the purpose behind Book 2. For Stancliffe, Book 2 is no longer an anomaly and of secondary interest relative to Book 1, but it is of central importance for understanding Jonas's intentions. Stancliffe argues convincingly and conclusively for the unity of Book 2, which is clear from references in the text that Jonas intended Books 1 and 2 to be disseminated together. Stancliffe highlights Jonas's skill as a hagiographer who creatively rewrote the history of Columbanus and his disciples. She argues that following the Agrestius affair and the Synod of Mâcon in 626, modifications in monastic practice took place that made the communities more acceptable to members of the Gallic episcopate who became key patrons in the successive wave of foundations that were modeled on Luxeuil. Jonas was writing in part for this audience and so had to walk a delicate tightrope between honoring Columbanus but in a way that did not offend his episcopal opponents or his monastic successors, who had, by all accounts, broken with the tradition of the founder.⁸⁹

Jonas's spin-doctoring was interpreted in a different light in Thomas Charles-Edwards's chapter on Columbanus in his book *Early Christian Ireland*, published in 2000. Charles-Edwards argues that Jonas was not deliberately distorting the changes that had come about in the Columbanian tradition. Rather than seeing the Synod of Mâcon in 626/7 as a decisive break in Columbanian tradition with the introduction of the *RB*, Charles-Edwards argued that the *RB* may have been used in conjunction with other normative texts from the start in Columbanus's monasteries. It is likely that Columbanus knew the *RB*, and Charles-Edwards argues that the Rule followed in Columbanus's communities was essentially the dictat of the abbot—oral prescriptions combined with written guidelines.⁹⁰ References to rules in texts at this time may refer to oral prescriptions that governed the monastic pattern of life and could be combined with different monastic practices. The references to a *regula mixta*, or "mixed rule," in later charters need not necessarily concern an actual written text but a general pattern of monastic life that combined elements from the Rules of Columbanus and Benedict, among others.

Charles-Edwards does not see a radical break in Columbanian tradition after 626 but rather a continuation and acceleration of a process established by Columbanus.⁹¹ He also expertly situates the developments in Columbanian monasticism within a broader context that stresses the fluid contacts between

89. Stancliffe 2001, 215.

90. Charles-Edwards 2000, 386–388; on the development of monastic rules, see Rousseau and Diem forthcoming, with further references; Diem 2016a on Columbanian Rules.

91. Charles-Edwards 2000, 389.

Ireland, Gaul, Rome, and Anglo-Saxon England. In contrast to Wood, Charles-Edwards identifies distinctly Irish features in the *Life*. This is particularly apparent in Jonas's remarkable silence concerning Columbanus's relics and any posthumous miracles associated with the saint's body. In contrast to the hagiography of Gregory of Tours and other Merovingian works, no emphasis was placed on the posthumous miracles that usually took place around the tomb of the saint. The emphasis instead is on the community in Book 2 that continues the tradition of the founder.⁹² While Charles-Edwards rightly points out that this is a feature of Irish hagiography, it should also be noted that this reflects a more monastic conception of posthumous miracles that goes back to the earliest monastic hagiography.

Charles-Edwards also takes a more nuanced view of Columbanus than Wood, who does not see Columbanus as a missionary figure because he did not preach to pagans outside the Frankish sphere of influence.⁹³ Charles-Edwards emphasizes the innovative aspects of Columbanus's monasticism and its appeal to the Frankish elite, which, among other things, provided pastoral care and missionary centers in the countryside.⁹⁴ In recent scholarship, the tendency has been to downplay Columbanus's role in the missionary impulse that developed in the seventh century and to see this as purely an innovation of his Frankish successors rather than as the fulfillment of Columbanus's interest in evangelization—whether that was for Gallic peasants or for pagans beyond the boundaries of the Frankish kingdoms.⁹⁵ The foundation of Luxeuil beside hot springs that had strong pagan associations may have been a deliberate choice by Columbanus to “draw off all the inner energy from pagan cults. To that extent, the monastery as such might be a missionary community.”⁹⁶

The Rule of Columbanus, or the *regula Columbani* (hereafter *RC*), as it appears in Jonas was the subject of a detailed German article in 2002 by Albrecht Diem, who suggested that the term does not refer to the two surviving written Rules of Columbanus, which were too incomplete to serve as the programmatic texts for the Columbanian movement, but rather refers to a process of foundation.⁹⁷ Diem

92. Charles-Edwards 2000, 346–350.

93. Wood 2001b, 34–35.

94. Charles-Edwards 2000, 383. On this aspect in relation to the later Columbanian bishops in northern Gaul, see Fouracre 1979.

95. See, e.g., Fox 2014.

96. Charles-Edwards 2000, 383. This point is taken up by O'Hara 2015, who considers Columbanus's monastic foundations from the perspective of Christianization and identifies a strategy of monastic foundation that Columbanus pursued.

97. Diem 2002, 64, 67. The two rules, the *Regula monachorum* and the *Regula coenobialis*, are edited and translated by G. S. M. Walker. See *RM* and *RCoen* in my references list. On the Rules, see Stevenson 1997.

sees the *RC* as a process of cooperation between the Columbanian communities and their sponsors which stressed the inaccessibility of sacred space, freedom from episcopal control, the importance of intercessory prayer, and the influence of the Luxeuil community.⁹⁸ He sees the *VC* as a programmatic text and as essentially containing the *Regula Columbani*. Jonas is seen as a chronicler of a monastic movement who wrote the *VC* as a joint project with Luxeuil and Bobbio after a period of decisive change within the movement. The introduction of the mixed rule may have referred not to a written text but to changes in the internal and external patterns of the monastic life practiced by the Columbanian communities. Diem emphasizes the novelty of Jonas's work and how it differs from all other hagiographical texts at this time.⁹⁹

Diem develops these ideas further in his influential and thought-provoking 2007 *Speculum* article, in which he argues that the *VC* can be seen as a radical new departure in defining concepts of sanctity. He argues that the *VC* sets out a textual basis for a new and formative concept of a holy monastic institution that superseded the charisma of the individual holy man of Late Antiquity.¹⁰⁰ For Diem, influenced by Weber's concept of the routinization of charisma, the progress from Book 1 to Book 2 can be seen within the context of the institutionalization of charisma from the holy man to the holy community, where the community takes over the sanctity of the founder. In contrast to established norms relating to the holy in Gaul, the emphasis was not on the cult of relics but on the living community whose efficacy for intercessory prayer depended on its independence from external power structures. The miracle accounts are thus read as lessons for Jonas's monastic and aristocratic audience in how to respect the sacred space and the *RC*. While this experiment only lasted for around two generations, Diem sees the *VC* as a turning point in the history of monasticism with its emphasis on the sanctity of the community, rather than on individuals or their relics.¹⁰¹ He is aware that the *VC* was written not just for an exclusive monastic audience but also for kings and nobles. While Saint-Maurice d'Agaune and Caesarius of Arles's nunnery of Saint John can be seen as forerunners to the importance attached to intercessory prayer and the inaccessibility of monastic space, Diem argues that these aspects became more prevalent in the Columbanian communities of the seventh century: "These elements already played a role in earlier monasteries in Gaul, yet without such prominence and without being combined into a single monastic program."¹⁰²

98. Diem 2002, 71.

99. Diem 2002, 72.

100. Diem 2007a, 556.

101. Diem 2007a, 558.

102. Diem 2007a, 535. See Gregory of Tours *Liber vitae patrum* 1.6, on the Jura fathers, which raises the issue of accessibility in relation to the graves of Romanus and Lupicinus, at least for women.

The symbiosis between Luxeuil and the Frankish elite in the promotion of monastic foundations during the seventh century, which led to the development of the *Eigenkloster*, or family monastery, on the estates of the Frankish nobility as proposed by Prinz in 1965, was challenged by Sarah Tatum in her PhD thesis from 2007. Tatum convincingly argues by her close reading of Columbanian hagiography that there were tensions within the Columbanian movement and that cooperation with Frankish noble families was less willing from the point of view of the monastic communities than Prinz (and others) assumed. She shows that the *Selbstheiligung* ("noble self-sanctification") that Prinz perceived in the hagiography linked to the Luxeuil circle was much more a feature of the powerful Austrasian noble family of the Pippinids (the ancestors of the Carolingian dynasty) and the hagiographic texts written in their circle after the 650s. She argues that the true proprietary monasteries of this period should be seen within the context of the Pippinid rise to power and not that of the Columbanian communities that often sought to distance themselves from the involvement of outside influence.¹⁰³ She suggests that Jonas was suspicious of the role of bishops and of noble families in monastic affairs and in some cases even sought to downplay their role within the movement.¹⁰⁴ Tatum's work is important in challenging some of Prinz's key assumptions and highlighting the tensions between access and exclusion within the Columbanian movement.

Jonas's vilification of Agrestius (the Luxeuil monk who had initiated the Synod of Mâcon in 626/7) as the Judas and Cain of the movement is brilliantly reconsidered by Bruno Dumézil in his French article from 2007. Dumézil argues that Agrestius was in fact the true disciple of Columbanus. He suggests that Agrestius may have become disillusioned with attempts by the abbots of Luxeuil and Bobbio to normalize the RC and only turned against Luxeuil once his efforts to follow the example of Columbanus had been frustrated by Abbot Eustasius, who expelled him from Luxeuil.¹⁰⁵ Dumézil brings to the fore the political and regional factionalism dividing the principal actors in the Agrestius affair, which was more than an attack on the religious norms and traditions of Columbanus. It was also about Luxeuil as an agent of Neustrian power in Burgundy, which may have alienated Burgundian noble factions to which Agrestius belonged.¹⁰⁶ For Dumézil, Agrestius's attack on the RC and the legacy of Columbanus was actually an assault on Luxeuil's close links to the Neustrian court of Chlothar II.

103. Tatum 2007, 26–27.

104. Tatum 2007, 28–72.

105. Dumézil 2007, 138–141.

106. Dumézil 2007, 145–149.

Agrestius's mysterious assassination within a year of the Synod of Mâcon may have come about because he was seen as a spokesman for the Burgundian faction against Chlothar II, and his killing may have been politically motivated. Within this context of political factionalism, Jonas is seen as a collaborator with Luxeuil in turning upside down Agrestius's true role as a defender of Columbanus's monastic norms and legacy. While Dumézil's thesis is attractive, it is difficult to sustain, given that Jonas is our only source for this episode and for his strong condemnation of Agrestius as the attacker of Columbanus's legacy. Dumézil does highlight, however, the political factionalism between the Neustrian and Burgundian elites and that this may have played a greater role in the conflict than Jonas reveals.

Jonas is briefly discussed in Michael Richter's 2008 book on Bobbio, the first comprehensive study in English on the history of Bobbio from its foundation until the end of the Carolingian period. Despite the many shortcomings of the book, Richter puts forward a compelling case for the continuing presence of Irish monks and their influence in Bobbio.¹⁰⁷ His reading of Jonas and the *VC* is less convincing. Richter comments that the *VC*, one of the most important sources for the early history of Bobbio, reflected the collective memory of the Columbanian communities in Burgundy and that Jonas appears to have written in Burgundy.¹⁰⁸ This is incorrect, as is his assertion that Jonas was not a true Columbanian monk because he did not remain in either Bobbio or Luxeuil. He bizarrely sees Jonas's peripatetic work as a monk as "a lack of commitment to the ideals of Columbanus."¹⁰⁹ The *VC* is considered largely as a Luxeuil product.¹¹⁰ Despite these puzzling claims, Richter highlights the *VC* as an important source for studying the transmission of Classical and Late Antique texts.¹¹¹ While highlighting the close connections between Bobbio and the Lombard court, Richter also draws attention to Jonas's knowledge of Agilulf's charter of foundation for Bobbio and to Jonas's silence regarding the other royal charters granted to the monastery by Agilulf's successors. It appears that Jonas consciously sought to downplay the involvement of the Lombard monarchy in supporting the community. This seems to be a characteristic feature of Jonas's hagiography, whereby he minimized the role of outside authorities. Richter also argues that the *RB* was not introduced in Bobbio under the abbacy of Bobolenus, the fourth abbot of Bobbio (r. 639–652) and one of the dedicatees of the *VC*. Bobolenus

107. For reviews of the book, see O'Hara 2009b; Balzaretto 2010.

108. Richter 2008, 24, 17.

109. Richter 2008, 50.

110. Richter 2008, 52.

111. Richter 2008, 51.

is termed the *regulam conservator* (“preserver of the rule”) in the encomium written after his death, which we will return to later. For Richter, the introduction of the *RB* in Bobbio would have amounted to “undermining the formative influence of the first abbot of Bobbio.”¹¹² Bobbio is seen as preserving the Irish spirituality and ethos of Columbanus with continuing links to Ireland and Irish pilgrims.¹¹³

While Jonas’s *VC* has understandably received the most attention in the scholarship, Jonas’s other “occasional” saints’ Lives, the *VV* and the *VJ*, have received comparably little attention since Krusch’s detailed study on these works.¹¹⁴ They have generally been dismissed as of minor value or interest, as we have seen above. The fallacy of such a reading was shown in 2008 with Diem’s comprehensive article on Jonas’s *VJ* published in the *Revue Mabillon*. Diem described Jonas’s outstanding skill as a writer who used and adapted the works of Gregory of Tours, Athanasius’s *Life of Antony*, and John Cassian’s *Conferences* to fashion his hagiography on the founder of the Burgundian monastery of Réomé. Jonas was no longer dealing with a near-contemporary subject but with a figure in the distant past. In the *VC*, Jonas credits Columbanus with reestablishing the *medicamenta paenitentiae* (“medicines of penance”) and the monastic life in Gaul which had fallen into abeyance because of the negligence of the bishops. In the *VJ*, Diem shows that the ancient Gallic tradition of monasticism already had many of the characteristics that the Columbanian movement promoted and reads the *Life* as containing lessons on the *RC*, such as the inaccessibility of monastic space and the sanctity of the community over that of relics.¹¹⁵ Diem shows how, although he was influenced by Cassian’s work, Jonas used Cassian to create his own distinctive monastic program centered not on the individual ascetic but on the community. Whereas in Cassian the monk’s pursuit of the virtues was seen as a lifelong process, in Jonas these qualities are assumed as given; what matters is the monk’s role in the community, which is *de facto* sacred in itself.¹¹⁶ In deconstructing the *VJ* and showing how Jonas used his sources, Diem reveals “one of the most fascinating pieces of Merovingian hagiography.”¹¹⁷

The question of Jonas’s audience and what he was trying to achieve in Book 2 were the subjects of two articles published by this author in 2009. I argued that the *VC* was more widely disseminated in Merovingian Gaul than was hitherto thought and that it was addressed not only primarily to a monastic audience

112. Richter 2008, 67.

113. Richter 2008, 67–68.

114. See Krusch 1893.

115. Diem 2008, 44–48.

116. Diem 2008, 38–44.

117. Diem 2008, 49.

confined to Burgundy but also to the Merovingian royal court at Paris and to a wider aristocratic and episcopal network of patrons. By tracing textual references in other seventh-century historiographical and hagiographical works written in Merovingian Gaul, I attempted to show that the *VC* was being read in different parts of Gaul and that it was being disseminated in two books, which indicated, in the absence of manuscript evidence from this period, that the work was initially transmitted in one volume. Jonas's false ascription to the king who gave the site of Annegray to Columbanus was interpreted, as Wood previously noted, as evidence for Jonas's involvement in the *damnatio memoriae* of Brunhild and as part of Neustrian propaganda to blacken the memory of the Burgundian regime which they had destroyed. I argued that there would have been no need to do this if the work were intended solely for a restricted monastic audience. The fact that Jonas manipulated this information is a strong indication that the work was also meant for the royal court in Paris and for the extended aristocratic and episcopal network connected to the Neustrian court.¹¹⁸

In the other 2009 article, I also discussed the unusual miracle accounts focusing on death and the afterlife which appear predominantly in Book 2 and especially in the longest section on the convent of Faremoutiers. This section has been seen as incongruous with the rest of the *VC*, with some scholars even suggesting that it was never intended for circulation with the rest of the work. Like Stancliffe, however, I read this as an integral and important part of the *VC*. Scholars such as Adalbert de Vogüé and Renate Vogeler have shown the undoubted influence that Book 4 of Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* had on Jonas despite Jonas's puzzling silence on this source.¹¹⁹ Whereas Gregory's miracles involving death and the afterlife in his *Dialogues* were meant to show the imminence of the end time (i.e., they served an eschatological purpose), I argued that Jonas's use of such miracles was primarily institutional; they were intended to contrast the fates of those who lived by the *RC* and those who rebelled against it. Jonas used such miracles as exempla to defend the *RC* and as a warning to those who sought to undermine it. From this perspective, Jonas can be seen as a writer who was addressing a wider audience.¹²⁰ In this case, the convergence of different groups of audiences shows the growing importance of hagiography as a form of social communication and discourse on a much broader social level. Hagiography was no longer confined to coterie audiences but assumes a more important social function, as Martin Heinzelmann and Jacques

118. O'Hara 2009c.

119. De Vogüé 1988c; Vogeler 1988.

120. O'Hara 2009a.

Fontaine already noted in the 1970s and which Jamie Kreiner discusses in her excellent 2014 book.¹²¹

The extent to which Columbanus was influenced by other monastic traditions and thinkers while on the Continent was the subject of an article by Clare Stancliffe in 2011. While Columbanus was eager to acquire the latest texts, Stancliffe argues that the principal influences on his monastic theology—Cassian, Basil, Jerome—would have been available to him in Ireland. She emphasizes that it was Irish monastic customs that formed the “gold standard” for Columbanus, although he was open to new texts on the Continent which would enable his continuing vision of the monk’s calling. She shows convincingly that Columbanus relied on the sixth-century *Rule of the Master* rather than (or perhaps in addition to) the *RB* on the subject of obedience, which was evidently an issue within the Columbanian communities. Columbanus’s notion of the authority of the abbot is more akin to the *Rule of the Master* than to the *RB*, but this attitude may have been shaped more by his background in Bangor and the necessities involved in establishing new communities in the early days in Burgundy rather than by the influence of newly acquired texts from Rome.¹²² Stancliffe brilliantly argues that the earliest surviving manuscript of the *Rule of the Master*, dated to the sixth/seventh century, was sent from Rome to Columbanus at Luxeuil around 600, when Columbanus was in contact with Pope Gregory the Great. The manuscript later ended up at Corbie, a Luxeuil foundation. Stancliffe’s hypothesis is strengthened by the fact that Columbanus cites from *The Sentences of Sextus* (a rare work which is contained in the Corbie manuscript) in his *RM*.¹²³ Her evidence is important in the context of the debate between the Benedictine scholar de Vogüé, who claimed that the *Rule of the Master* was composed in the sixth century south of Rome, and Marilyn Dunn, who argued that it was composed at Bobbio in the seventh century as the mixed rule, a claim that can no longer be sustained.¹²⁴ Stancliffe is also attentive to the Irish features of Columbanus’s monasticism, which, in contrast to Wood and others, she regards as distinct features of his monasticism: “[Columbanus’s] ideal of *peregrinatio*, concern to extend repeatable penance to lay people, and attitude to authority in the Church came from Ireland, as, probably, did his simultaneous concern for pastoral care and solitary contemplation and the practice of zoning his monasteries so that only part was accessible to lay people, while the interior was barred to them, thus maintaining monastic seclusion. . . . One can

121. Heinzelmann 1973; Fontaine 1976, 1980; Kreiner 2014b.

122. I am indebted to Thomas Charles-Edwards on this point.

123. Stancliffe 2011, 25.

124. On the debate concerning the *Rule of the Master*, see Dunn 1990, 1992; de Vogüé 1992.

also make out a case for Columbanus having encountered most of the authors responsible for his monastic inspiration before he left Ireland.”¹²⁵

Columbanus’s Irish formation was also the subject of a 2011 article by Aidan Breen, who was preparing a new digital edition of Book 1 before his sudden death in 2013. Breen noted that Jonas’s information on Columbanus’s Irish background was exceptionally accurate and postulated that he may have relied on a written memorandum or dossier compiled during Columbanus’s lifetime, as is known from other cases where authors relied in part on written dossiers when compiling their hagiographies.¹²⁶ Gallus, Columbanus’s Irish disciple, who became a hermit in the Steinach valley in 612, is seen as Jonas’s principal eyewitness source for Columbanus’s period in Ireland, and Breen does not doubt that Jonas visited the hermit en route between Gaul and northern Italy.¹²⁷ Breen also highlights Jonas’s familiarity with so-called Celtic liturgy and suggests that Jonas’s literary education was largely Irish.¹²⁸ This seems doubtful, given the rudimentary nature of Bobbio’s library at the time of Jonas’s entry. It is more likely that Jonas received his liberal education in Susa.¹²⁹ While Breen’s statement that Jonas began writing his VC on his return to Bobbio in 642 is certainly incorrect,¹³⁰ he provides a useful biblical and source index in an appendix to the article.

Monastic rules as sources for understanding processes of formation of institutions and experiments in community building were again the subject of an article by Diem in 2011. Diem takes the *Regula Donati*, a seventh-century rule for nuns written by a Columbanian monk-bishop, Donatus of Besançon, as a test case for studying how the author selectively used his sources to create a new monastic program. Diem notes that the *Regula Donati* and the *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines* (which he ascribes to Jonas) are the only written manifestations of the mixed rule, or *regula mixta*,¹³¹ and so can reveal important clues as to how the RB was incorporated in the Columbanian movement. Their application in female communities may have been a result of the fact that they were less embedded in long-lasting traditions and so could serve as “testing grounds” for new monastic patterns.¹³² The VC, which Diem memorably notes as counting

125. Stancliffe 2011, 26.

126. Breen 2011, 7.

127. Breen 2011, 6. Zironi 2004 also details the close connections that existed between the Bobbio community and this region of Switzerland.

128. Breen 2011, 16.

129. Engelbert 1968; Riché 1976.

130. Breen 2011, 4.

131. Diem 2011c, 3.

132. Diem 2011c, 37–38.

“more casualties that a good Shakespearian drama,” is touched on briefly.¹³³ He makes the important point that there was probably fierce competition between Bobbio and Luxeuil after Columbanus’s death for which monastery claimed the founder’s heritage. There may also have been a dispute about the role of the *RB* in the new reforms, as some may have had concerns about whether this meant breaking with Columbanus’s legacy. The lack of any reference or allusion to the *RB* in Jonas’s work suggests to Diem that Jonas consciously ignored it because he did not support its adoption in the Columbanian *familia*.¹³⁴ Throughout the *VC*, Jonas always refers to the *RC* in monasteries where we have additional sources that indicate that the mixed rule, the *Regula Benedicti et Columbani*, was in use. This is interesting in light of Jonas’s possible authorship of the *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines*, as Diem notes that the author of this text constructed it against the *RB*.¹³⁵ According to Diem, while this author knew of the *RB* and used it in his Rule, he never quotes from it, and he substantially revised its content when formulating his own Rule. In contrasting the use of the *RB* in both Columbanian rules for women, Diem notes that their differences unmask kernels of dissent within the Columbanian movement, suggesting that there were different factions that disputed what role the *RB* should play in the Columbanian tradition.¹³⁶

Multiplicity and variation within the Columbanian movement were addressed by Israeli scholar Yaniv Fox in his doctoral dissertation from 2012 and expanded in his 2014 book based on his PhD thesis. With Fox’s study on the Columbanian movement and its interrelationship with the Frankish aristocracy, we come full circle back to the 1965 seminal work of Prinz. Fox substantially builds on and refines Prinz’s model, identifying patterns of aristocratic patronage and regional variations within the Columbanian movement. While seeing common features of a shared identity within the Columbanian *familia*, Fox shows how Frankish aristocratic families used monasteries to control their land, define identity, and achieve political hegemony. His work identifies the key aristocratic networks and how this process of cooperation with Luxeuil monks operated and changed over time. Fox sees the Columbanian achievement principally from a political and economic perspective: “as a tool for the Merovingians to expand their authority and manage their territorial interests, a platform for many of the developments that characterized the Frankish aristocracy, and as a springboard for introducing new trends into the religious landscape of Francia.”¹³⁷ Fox also minimizes the role of the founder and his

133. Diem 2011c, 9.

134. Diem 2011c, 10–11.

135. Diem 2011c, 33.

136. Diem 2011c, 33.

137. Fox 2012, 10.

Irish monks, seeing the Columbanian movement primarily as a Frankish phenomenon.¹³⁸ Although Jonas tried to conceal the influence of the *RB* in the Columbanian communities, Fox does not consider that Jonas was influenced by Irish monastic traditions at Bobbio. Instead, he interprets Jonas's concern with the inviolability of inner monastic space as a reflection of the movement's efforts to secure exemption for its monasteries and, following Wood, not as a natural development from Columbanus's own policies: "Jonas's purist attitudes are never linked to any Irish traditions, only Columbanian ones, which means that he, at least, considered the two to be separate."¹³⁹ The one trend that Fox sees as continuing throughout the Columbanian tradition was that of the cooperation between monks and aristocratic benefactors.¹⁴⁰ This cooperation, however, may have been less voluntary than it might initially seem, as Tatum showed in the attempts by hagiographers to distance their communities from the influence of noble families.¹⁴¹ As Fox makes clear, the variation within the Columbanian *familia* may have allowed for a range of attitudes as to what extent communities wished to cooperate and work with noble families.

This overview of scholarship and debates in this field should give a sense of the multiplicity of interpretations from which Jonas and his hagiography have been approached. As will be apparent, there is a range in interpretations and ways of reading Jonas that have tended to focus predominantly on the *VC*. This should not come as a surprise, given the diversity in interpretation that other early medieval authors have received.¹⁴² This is understandable, given that many of these texts are complex, multilayered, and deliberately ambiguous narratives. Indeed, Jonas's ambiguity may have been one of his most effective authorial strategies, and there is no doubt that he was a highly skilled and deliberate author. Jonas had a delicate task in honoring the founding saint while dealing with the major issues of contention that erupted after Columbanus's death. He could not ignore the criticisms leveled against Columbanus and the recent dissensions within the communities but needed to address them in such a way that those factions within the communities would feel included in the new version that Jonas was presenting to the whole Columbanian *familia*. He needed to do this while at the same time trying to revindicate Columbanus's reputation.

138. Fox 2014, 295.

139. Fox 2014, 297.

140. Fox 2014, 301.

141. Tatum 2007.

142. Goffart's 1988 book on *The Narrators of Barbarian History* and the various reactions to it are a good case in point. On early medieval authors and their identities, see the contributions in Corradini et al. 2010.

Jonas's intention in writing the *VC* and in constructing a carefully doctored version of events could be seen within the context of providing a new identity for the reformed Columbanian *familia* of the second generation.¹⁴³ Jonas has been cast in the role of the reconciler who skillfully dealt with the troubled legacy of Columbanus and his communities in order to “forge an identity for the modified Columbanian monasticism” of his own day.¹⁴⁴

THE PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE OF BOOK 2 OF
THE *VITA COLUMBANI*

There are 187 extant manuscripts of the *VC* ranging from the first half of the ninth century to the sixteenth century.¹⁴⁵ The large number of surviving manuscripts attests to the popularity and importance of the work, as does the fact that no later hagiographer prepared a new version of the *Life*, unlike the case of the *VV*, which was rewritten by Alcuin.¹⁴⁶ Krusch produced the standard editions of the text for the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*.¹⁴⁷ He used 114 manuscripts for his 1905 edition, which remains the standard and definitive edition.¹⁴⁸ However, some additional manuscripts have since been identified, notably a further ninth-century manuscript, Metz, Grand Séminaire 1, discovered in 1954 and a transcription of which was published in 1965.¹⁴⁹

No manuscript contains the whole text in the order that Jonas seems to have envisaged for Book 2, to judge by internal references within the text¹⁵⁰—that is, the *Life* of Athala, followed by that of Eustasius, the history of the nuns of Faremoutiers, and, as a conclusion to the Book, an account of the monks of Bobbio during the abbacy of Bertulf. The earliest manuscript to contain the whole text, albeit not in the order Krusch argued was that intended by Jonas, is Turin F IV 26, which Bischoff assigned to the late ninth century and which can be taken to be a product of Bobbio. Here the chapters of Book 2 are presented in an

143. Stancliffe 2001, 219–220.

144. Stancliffe 2001, 220.

145. For an updated list of manuscripts, see the appendix. I have listed 168 manuscripts, while Alain Dubreucq, who is preparing a new edition and translation of Jonas's *VC* for the *Sources Chrésiennes* series, has discovered some additional ones; with our combined lists, the total comes to 187.

146. See Veyrard-Cosme 2003, 77–107.

147. Krusch 1902, 1905.

148. See *Conspectus codicum* in Krusch 1905, ix–xi. Lawlor 1902–1904 also published a lengthy discussion of the manuscripts. For Krusch's response, see Krusch 1904. In most respects the ninth-century St Gallen manuscript, which Krusch used for his edition (A1a), is a superior witness than that of the Metz manuscript. A new edition by Alain Dubreucq, completing work carried out by Aidan Breen, is promised.

149. Leclercq 1955; Tosi 1965.

150. Stancliffe 2001, 196–199.

order different from that of Jonas's apparent plan, so that all the material relating to the Italian monastery comes before that on Luxeuil and Faremoutiers.¹⁵¹ The manuscript transmission, especially that of Book 2, makes it clear that medieval readers were more interested in the first part of the *Life* concerning Columbanus than in the hodgepodge Book 2.

By focusing on three communities in the period following Columbanus's death in Book 2, Jonas could illustrate the fates of those who remained faithful to or transgressed the saint's teachings. The structure and function of Book 2 is central to Jonas's overall aim in the VC and yet has often been dismissed as irrelevant. The concept behind Book 2 was unique, as Jonas departed from prior hagiographical models.¹⁵² Due to the unusual structure of Book 2 and the complexities of the manuscript evidence, however, the structure of the work has been queried. A number of scholars have argued that because no manuscript contains all the sections in the order in which Krusch edited the *Vita*, Jonas may have intended Book 2 as different sections written for their respective communities.¹⁵³ According to this interpretation, the Faremoutiers chapters were written for Faremoutiers, the Bobbio chapters for Bobbio, and the Luxeuil chapters for Luxeuil. The entire unity of the text is thus brought into question because of the complexity of the manuscript evidence.

Yet it is first of all clear from the text itself that Jonas conceived of the *Vita* as a whole in two volumes and that it was to be read as such. Jonas specifically states: "I have divided the material into two volumes to remove the excess of putting all in one volume for the readers: the first sets out the deeds of the blessed Columba, and the second has recorded the life of his disciples Athala, Eustasius, and others whom I have remembered."¹⁵⁴ There are also cross-references within the text that make it clear that Jonas conceived of both parts as a single unit. In relating Columbanus's reception at the villa of Chagneric and the blessing of his daughter, Burgundofara, Jonas notes that he will narrate more things about Burgundofara later in the work.¹⁵⁵ He also mentions the

151. The ordering of the chapters is 2.1–6 (Athala), 2.23–25 (Bertulf), 2.7–10 (Eustasius), 2.11–22 (Burgundofara and Faremoutiers).

152. Diem 2007a, 549 n. 160, notes the unique structure of the VC in comparison with other early medieval saints' Lives that were also in two parts.

153. See Rohr 1995, 243–244; Berschin 1988a, 37–38; Tosi 1965, xxvi–vii. Krusch's reconstruction of the text is supported by Stancliffe 2001, 192–201.

154. *Quae sunt ergo posita duobus libellis intercisi, ut uno volumine legentibus fastidium amputarem: primus beati Columbæ gesta perstringit, secundus discipulorum eius Athalæ, Eusthasi vel ceterorum quos meminimus vitam edisserit. VC, Epistula ad Waldebertum et Bobolenum: 147.*

155. *Benedixit ergo vir Dei domum eius, filiamque illius nomen Burgundofara, quae infra infantiae annis erat, benedicens, Domino vovit, de quo postea in subsequentibus narrabimus. VC 1.26: 209 (referring to 2.11–22).*

establishment of Faremoutiers in the Eustasian section of Book 2. Jonas refers here to the miracles that took place in this monastery and says that he will relate these if he should live long enough.¹⁵⁶ The phrase Jonas uses here is *si vita comes fuerit*, and this has caused some confusion. Tosi thought it unusual that Jonas should write this if he were only to deal with Faremoutiers four chapters later, and, as such, it supported his argument that the Faremoutiers chapters were not part of Jonas's original work (the ninth-century Metz manuscript unknown to Krusch lacks these chapters).¹⁵⁷ This hypothesis has been dismissed by Stancliffe, who sees the expression as being, "commonplace for Jonas, reared on Columbanus's teaching that a monk should live as though he died daily; and I regard it as more justifiable to stand this argument on its head, and point out that already, in the Eustasian section, Jonas was planning to include material on the Faremoutiers miracles."¹⁵⁸ The expression, however, has nothing to do with any fears Jonas might have had about dying or about the monastic notion that a monk should live as though he died daily but is rather an innocuous borrowing of a phrase frequently used by Jerome in his works. This, one of Jonas's few explicit citations of a patristic source, shows how a simple phrase can mislead. The expression should not be interpreted literally but as a common stock phrase.

The textual threads concerning Burgundofara and her community are finally tied together when Jonas reminds the reader at the beginning of his section on Faremoutiers that he has previously made mention of Burgundofara's community.¹⁵⁹ There should be no doubt, therefore, that the Faremoutiers section was an integral part of the VC and that Jonas conceived of both parts as a single work. Yet because Book 2 dealt with a number of different figures and communities, it was easy for those copying the work to select those sections that most interested them, thus in time losing the unity of Book 2. This is the natural explanation for the complicated manuscript evidence in the absence of any surviving manuscripts from the seventh and eighth centuries.

The VC was initially disseminated in two volumes because of citations to both parts of the *Vita* in other hagiographical works written in seventh-century Merovingian Gaul. The *Passio Praeiectionis*, written in the Auvergne around 676, shows knowledge of both books of the VC. In the prologue, for example, the hagiographer explicitly praises Jonas's work: "In living memory too the eloquent Jonas produced his very splendid life of Saint Columbanus and his disciples

156. VC 2.7, 243.

157. Tosi 1965, xxvii.

158. Stancliffe 2001, 198.

159. *Meminisse lectorem velim me superius fuisse pollicitum de coenubio supra memoratae Burgundofarae, quem Evoriacas vocant.* VC 2.11: 257.

Athalus, Eustasius, and Bertulf.”¹⁶⁰ This shows that by the end of the seventh century, the *Vita* was being circulated in both its parts but that, as it makes no mention of the Faremoutiers section, it was already being selectively copied. The *Vita Sadalbergae*, written around 680, likewise shows evidence that both books were being disseminated together, as the author has copied out verbatim whole passages from Books 1 and 2.¹⁶¹ Although these sources prove the unity of both parts of the *VC*, this also reveals that very early on, Jonas’s text was being selectively copied, which is not surprising. Bede and Gregory of Tours both stipulated that nothing in their work was to be changed following their death, in an attempt to maintain the unity of conception of their work. This was not the case with the *VC*, where selective copying of the work already in the seventh century led to the loss of Jonas’s conceptual framework for his text. This could also reflect that Jonas’s vision of the unity of the Columbanian *familia* was, by the end of the seventh century, unrealized.

A MEDITATION ON ABBATIAL AUTHORITY: THE *VITA IOHANNIS*

The *VJ* is foremost a meditation on abbatial authority written specifically for the Luxeuil-trained abbot Chunna and perhaps more broadly for the abbots of new Columbanian foundations, many of whom had been Luxeuil monks. John is Jonas’s ideal type of abbot, modeled on the archetype of Saint Antony and the pioneering desert fathers: humble, ascetic, reticent about exercising authority over others, willing to undertake manual labor with his monks, a guardian of monastic space and upholder of regular observance, a man above all dedicated to prayer and mortification. This is not the portrait of the abbot as *dominus*, a powerful aristocratic administrator with close ties to the royal court, such as the long-reigning aristocratic Waldebert of Luxeuil (r. 629–670),¹⁶² but as a humble *servus Domini*. The *Versus de Boboleno*, the encomium written to commemorate Bobolenus, the abbot of Bobbio, in the mid-650s, appears to have been written in the context of a debate on abbatial authority that was taking place at this time. Bobolenus is presented as the ideal abbot who is humble and who works alongside his monks, in contrast to other abbots who were obviously perceived to be haughty and arrogant. As the Luxeuil abbots starting with Eustasius increasingly became embedded in Frankish court culture and power politics and as the new abbots of Columbanian houses founded in collaboration with aristocratic

160. *Passio Praeiectionis*: 225.

161. *Vita Sadalbergae* prologue–10: 49–55 shows extensive use of both books of the *VC*.

162. See Fox 2014, 106–108.

patrons had to negotiate these power networks, Jonas and the Bobbio community may have had some reservations about the extent of this involvement with secular elites. The *VJ* should be read within this context and as a bookend to the *VC* that accords with and complements many of the key messages of the *VC*. As with the *VV*, which was written for the Columbanian monk-bishops, the *VJ* was written with the new Luxeuil-trained abbots in mind, who were placed in abbatial roles in the recently founded Columbanian houses, men such as Amatus in Remiremont, Germanus in Grandval, Agilus in Rebais, Remaclus in Solignac and later Stablo-Malmédy, Audomar in Sithiu, Theofred in Corbie, Wandregisel in Fontanelle, Filibert in Jumièges, and so on. The monks of Luxeuil dominated the abbacies of the new monastic foundations established from the second quarter of the seventh century. Most of these monks received their formation in Luxeuil under the abbacies of Eustasius or Waldebert, both of whom were closely connected to the Frankish court and aristocracy.

According to Jonas, John was a native of Tonnerre in the diocese of Langres.¹⁶³ He decided to leave the parental home and set up an ascetic community in the region of Semur.¹⁶⁴ Having gathered a number of followers, he had a crisis of conscience, feeling that he himself had received no monastic training. He therefore left his followers and went to the island monastery of Lérins.¹⁶⁵ There, after a year and a half, he was recognized as the ascetic who had left his own community. His bishop, Gregory of Langres, demanded his return.¹⁶⁶ Réomé, thereafter, gained the attention of kings and nobles.¹⁶⁷ The remainder of the *Life* concerns John's miracles, two of which can apparently be dated, respectively, to 539 and 543.¹⁶⁸ John's death date is not given, but Jonas does refer to later abbots of the community—Silvester Mummolinus, who was to become bishop of Langres, attending councils at Mâcon in 583 and 585, and Leubardinus, suggesting that Réomé flourished throughout the sixth century.¹⁶⁹

HOW A BISHOP SHOULD BEHAVE: THE *VITA VEDASTIS*

The *VV* is the shortest of the *Lives* attributed to Jonas of Bobbio. It concerns the first bishop of Arras, Vedast, who died around 540 and who is said to have played a role in the conversion of Clovis and the Franks to Christianity. The work was

163. *VJ* 1.

164. *VJ* 2.

165. *VJ* 4.

166. *VJ* 4.

167. *VJ* 18.

168. *VJ* 15, 17.

169. *VJ* 19.

attributed to Jonas in 1893, when Krusch presented an argument for his authorship based on strong stylistic and terminological parallels with his other known work.¹⁷⁰ The text was previously thought to have been written in the sixth century by an anonymous cleric of Arras.¹⁷¹ Krusch, however, showed that the Latin style of the work was more characteristic of the seventh-century ornate and poetic style of Jonas. He suggested that the VV was an occasional piece, hastily composed in response to a request from the cathedral clergy of Arras. Because of its close similarities to the VC, Krusch argued that it was probably written around the same time and that the work may have been commissioned to coincide with the centenary of Vedast's death in 640.¹⁷²

Krusch presented compelling evidence for ascribing the work to Jonas.¹⁷³ Terms such as *ovans*, *aequus/rectus arbiter*, *aulici regis*, *chuneii hostium*, *conclitu gradu*, *medicamenta vere fidei/penitentiae medicamenta*, *rerum Sator*, *superi*, *vitam degere*, and *salubria effamina* are stock phrases that appear in both the VV and the VC. His use of *superi* to mean "those still alive" and not "those in heaven," as was more usual, is also found in both works, as, for instance, in *inter superis vitam degeret* (VV 4) and *qui adhuc superis iunctus sit* (VC prefatory letter to the abbots). These would appear to be strong indications that the VV is the work of Jonas.¹⁷⁴ More recently, the eminent Latin philologist Kurt Smolak has studied the language and style of the VV and the VC and concluded that the works are probably by the same author: "Man darf also mit großer Wahrscheinlichkeit bei der seit Krusch traditionellen Autorenzuweisung verbleiben."¹⁷⁵ The use of a series of very specific topographical indicators, such as *in pago Vunginse ad locum qui dicitur Grandeponte, iuxta villa Rugliaco, super fluvium Axona* (VV 3) is also a distinct feature of Jonas's style, as is alliteration (*pugnaturus paratur pergere*, VC 1.3; *regni regimina reget*, VV 7).

Anne-Marie Helvétius, however, has challenged Krusch's ascription of the authorship of the *Life* to Jonas.¹⁷⁶ Rather than consider Krusch's linguistic arguments, she emphasized semantic difference between the two texts, in particular the use of the term *religio*. In the VC and the VJ, Jonas uses the term *religio* for the regular monastic life, while the author of the VV uses the term

170. Krusch 1893, 435–439.

171. Krusch 1893, 428.

172. Krusch 1893, 440.

173. Krusch 1893, esp. 435–440.

174. Diem 2008, 26–27, also notes these stock phrases as a distinguishing feature of Jonas's writing.

175. Personal correspondence and report, March 1, 2016. I am very grateful to Professor Kurt Smolak of the University of Vienna for taking the time to study the question of authorship and style in the context of the preparation of the translation of Jonas's hagiography for the TTH series.

176. Helvétius 2011.

more generally to mean the Christian religion.¹⁷⁷ This Helvétius linked to a broader point, that monasteries or monks play no role in the work, another of her reasons for not ascribing it to Jonas.¹⁷⁸ For Helvétius, the *Life* was written by a cleric of Arras in the context of competition over the cult of Vedast between the clergy of Arras and the monastery of Saint-Vaast, which claimed the relics of the saint.

The author most certainly had accurate topographical knowledge of Arras, as has been borne out by excavations carried out in the 1970s.¹⁷⁹ Traces of the Roman *castrum* have been discovered by archaeologists, as well as the episcopal *cathedra* from the sixth century in the nave of the primitive church and the episcopal residence—the *domus* and *cellola* mentioned by Jonas where Vedast died—next to the cathedral.¹⁸⁰ A number of cemeteries have been identified outside the city walls, which accords with the Roman sensibilities expressed by Vedast in the *Vita*, when he declared that he wished to be buried outside the city, and one of these may have been intended to serve as the episcopal tomb, as other sixth-century graves have been identified there.¹⁸¹ Even the description of the stream Le Crinchon, which ran by the walls and by which Vedast built his oratory from wood, has been confirmed by the archaeology.¹⁸² Pierre Leman has also suggested that the episode of the bear that Vedast expels from its den in the city is not as fanciful as it might at first appear; forestation spread during the Late Empire, bringing animals closer to urban settlements, and the bones of bears have frequently been discovered in early medieval urban settlements, including in an abandoned chapel.¹⁸³

In addition to accepting that the author had firsthand knowledge of Arras, we can also follow Helvétius in noting the distinction between the lives of Vedast and Columbanus: one concerns the secular clergy, and the other concerns monks and the monastic life. Moreover, the *VC* draws a sharp division between the monastic and the secular clergy. In terms of attitude, the two works are wide apart, and if we only had these two works and knew nothing else about Jonas, the case for different authorship might be compelling. However, we have one other *Life*, the *VJ*, in which there is much less of a division between monastic and secular clergy and indeed in which the bishops play a benign role. Clearly,

177. Helvétius 2011, 677–678.

178. Helvétius 2011, 677.

179. See Leman 1995.

180. The Roman *caladarium* had been transformed into the *domus* for the bishop. See Leman 1995, 174.

181. See *VV* 9. On the necropolises, Leman 1995, 171–172, 177, with map on 179.

182. *VV* 6, 9; Leman 1995, 175.

183. *VV* 6; Leman 1995, 175 n. 51.

the opinions expressed in the VC were not the only ones held by Jonas, and we must allow that in different contexts and perhaps at different stages of his life, he expressed different ideas. It therefore seems reasonable to accept that he might have used the word *religio* in more than one sense, depending on the nature of the work he was writing. The fact that monastic affairs do not feature in the *Life* of a missionary bishop may be of little significance, especially given the fact that monasticism is unlikely to have been an issue in the Arras region in Vedast's time. The author did not necessarily have any reason to talk of monasteries in relating the Life of the saint, and given Jonas's reservations about episcopal involvement in monastic affairs, silence would have been appropriate.

Of course, the silence regarding monasticism might be significant if, as Helvétius argues, the *Vita* was written in the context of rival claims, by the clergy of Arras and the monks of Saint-Vaast, over the relics of Vedast. For Helvétius, the *Life* must have been written after the monastery of Saint-Vaast was founded in the later seventh century or possibly as late as 700.¹⁸⁴ Here, however, we are faced with the fact that there is no mention of the monastery in the *Life*, and surely the author would have mentioned it if it had existed when he was writing, as Leman has argued.¹⁸⁵

It has been suggested that the oratory that Vedast built of wooden planks on the banks of the Crinchon was the site of the future abbey of Saint-Vaast, which was on the right side of the stream and which developed into a second urban center—*la ville*, as opposed to the Roman *cit  *, which was the site of the cathedral of Notre Dame.¹⁸⁶ This may have been a later foundation legend that sought to claim continuity with the time of Vedast. In actual fact, although the exact site has not been identified, the oratory may have lain just beyond the *castrum* wall, on the left side of the Crinchon stream.¹⁸⁷ The emphasis in the VV, however, is clearly on the tomb of the saint in the cathedral and on the bed relic in the *domus* adjacent to the cathedral where Vedast died. This may have developed as a focus of pilgrimage and cult, which Bishop Autbert and the cathedral clergy sought to cultivate. Although the tradition that Autbert had been a monk of Luxeuil is admittedly very late (seventeenth century) and uncertain,¹⁸⁸ it is not unlikely given the Luxeuil background of many of his episcopal contemporaries in the northern dioceses.¹⁸⁹ There were links between

184. Carolingian sources date the foundation of the monastery to the reign of Theuderic III (654–691). See Helvétius 2011, 674; Leman 1995, 177.

185. Leman 1995, 177.

186. See Leman 1995, 176–177.

187. Leman 1995, 176.

188. See M  riaux 2006a, 61.

189. On Autbert as a quondam monk of Luxeuil, see Wood 1994c, 188; Prinz 1965, 179.

Marchiennes and Arras, only forty-four kilometers away. Autbert, who was extremely active in promoting monasticism in his diocese,¹⁹⁰ officiated at the consecration of the church at Marchiennes, even though the monastery, where Jonas appears to have been abbot, was in the diocese of Verdun.¹⁹¹ Autbert also had links with Amandus and was involved with Bishop Eligius of Noyon in the translation of the relics of the Irish saint Fursey to Péronne in 654.¹⁹² It is easy to see how Jonas might have become involved in writing the *VV* once he had settled at Marchiennes, and it is not difficult to believe that he could have acquired accurate knowledge of the topography of Arras. It therefore seems best to place the *Life* within the context of the promotion of Vedast's cult by the Arras clergy during the mid-seventh century, prior to the foundation of the monastery of Saint-Vaast. The impetus for the composition of the *Life* may have been, as Krusch thought, the translation of the saint's relics to mark the centenary of his death in 640. The *Life of Gaugeric*, bishop of Cambrai, was written around the same time, and it is possible that Autbert commissioned both Lives simultaneously, as he held both sees. Both depict their subjects in much the same way. Some similarities between the two Lives have been noted. Could Jonas also be the author of the *Life of Gaugeric*? Stylistically, both Lives are quite similar, and both have miracle accounts concerning the bed relics on which the saints died. Helvétius tried to argue that the author of the *VV* copied from the *Life of Gaugeric*, but it is equally possible that it is the work of the same author or of two authors who were commissioned at the same time.

The cathedral city of Arras is not the only focus of the *VV*. Equally if not more important are the author's concerns with mission, which certainly coincide with those of Jonas. These are clearly stated in the preface to the *VC*, where Jonas talks of his involvement in the missionary work of Amandus. Helvétius noted the importance of mission within the *Vita* but considered only the later eighth-century missionary interests in the area and said nothing of seventh-century missionary activity. The *VV*, however, might reasonably be seen as a model for the missionary-bishops of Jonas's circle and for the Luxeuil-trained monk-bishops who played a prominent role in the Frankish Church at this time, many of whom Jonas mentions by name in the *VC*.¹⁹³ These men would have been among his target audience, and they were well connected with the royal court.

190. Dierkens 1985, 91–95, 304, 305.

191. For Autbert's involvement in the consecration of Marchiennes, see Pagani 1988, 60.

192. Mériaux 2006a, 61, 74.

193. Wood 1994c, 313.

The significance of the court in the *VV* was also noted by Helvétius, who suggested that the work might have been intended for the Pippinids at Attigny. Her observation, however, could equally apply to an earlier period, albeit perhaps not as early as Krusch's date of c. 640. It is certainly possible that one of Jonas's intentions in writing the *VC* was to attract support from the royal court during the minority of Clovis II. He had links with Clovis and his queen, Balthild, at the time of writing the *VJ* in 659.¹⁹⁴ He may have been aware of the acquisition of the royal demesne of Attigny, situated around 150 kilometers southeast of Marchiennes, and acquired by Clovis II in around 651. If Jonas had an eye on the presence of royalty at Attigny, he could also have written the *VV* in the 650s.

Turning from the question of authorship and the context in which it was written to the information that it presents, the *VV* is interesting for what it tells us about seventh-century perspectives on the Frankish past, specifically on the conversion of Clovis, a defining event in French history, and the beginnings of the Christianization of the Franks. Not surprisingly, the *Life* has attracted the attention of historians primarily as a source for the conversion and baptism of Clovis.¹⁹⁵ Although there are no verbal parallels, Jonas seems to have drawn on the *Histories* of Gregory of Tours for his account of Clovis's conversion after Clovis invokes divine assistance in a decisive battle against the Alamanni, from which he emerged the victor, and through the influence of his Catholic wife, Chlothild.¹⁹⁶ This battle and Clovis's subsequent conversion have traditionally been dated to 496, although a date for the baptism at least a decade later seems to be required by the evidence of Avitus of Vienne.¹⁹⁷ Jonas does not follow Gregory's account pedantically and differs in some minor respects; indeed, we may wonder whether the differences are large enough to suggest that Jonas was following not Gregory but rather the traditions on which the bishop of Tours had himself drawn. The king of the Alamanni who is killed in Gregory's account of the battle survives in Jonas's version and becomes the subject of Clovis. Jonas also mentions that after the battle, Clovis went to Toul, where he met Vedast, who became his catechist and instructed him in the faith—elements in the story not mentioned in Gregory's account.¹⁹⁸ While it might be implied by the bishop of Tours that Clovis's baptism by Bishop Remigius took place in Rheims, Gregory is not explicit on this fact.¹⁹⁹ It is Jonas's *VV* and the near

194. See preface to the *VJ*.

195. See Krusch 1893, 442–448. On Clovis's reign, see Wood 1994c, 41–49; Becher 2011, 185.

196. *DLH* 2.30; *VV* 2.

197. See Wood 1985; Shanzer 1998. Becher 2011, 200, favors the more traditional dating of 496.

198. *VV* 3.

199. *DLH* 2.31.

contemporary *Chronicle of Fredegar* that specifically note that the baptism took place at Rheims, the place of royal inauguration for the future kings of France.²⁰⁰ The conversion of Clovis and three thousand of his Franks was the advent of the Christianization of the Franks, something in which Jonas and the monk-bishops in his circle had an active interest.

In addition to showing an interest in Clovis, the author also set down the cultural memory of the destruction caused by Attila and his Huns during the mid-fifth century in the region of Arras. Jonas notes that the Huns destroyed the city, which led to the abandoned state in which Vedast found it.²⁰¹ Krusch thought that the abandonment of the town might explain Jonas's apparently anachronistic comment that Remigius as metropolitan appointed Vedast bishop of the *civitas* of Arras; episcopal election was the prerogative of the people of the town, subsequently to be confirmed by the king.²⁰² In fact, Krusch's surmise seems highly unlikely; there must have been a Christian population there for Vedast to be appointed bishop.

While it is unlikely that the town was completely abandoned, and while this may well be a motif to be read in the same light as Jonas's statement on the state of Luxeuil at the time of Columbanus's arrival, evidence for a widespread fire dating to the mid-fifth century has been discovered by archaeology.²⁰³ Whether this destruction was caused by the Huns is less certain, as they may never have reached Arras. The *Life* is the only evidence that Attila made a detour this far north from the places definitely threatened and destroyed by his horde.²⁰⁴ It could, in fact, have been the Franks under Chlodio, the father of Merovech, the eponymous ancestor of the Merovingian dynasty, who burned the town around the time of the battle of Vicus Helena, an unidentified site in the Artois, when they were defeated in around 448 by the troops of the Roman general Aetius. Rather than blaming the destruction of the town on the Franks, it may have been more attractive for Jonas to exploit the cultural memory and pin it on the Huns, the quintessential destructive barbarians.

The *Lives* of Columbanus, John, and Vedast provide in different ways snapshots of the seventh century and of how Jonas shaped the monastic past to provide new narratives for the communities he was writing for. Despite the challenges posed by Jonas, his saints' *Lives* are important sources for the development and growth of the monastic movement in the centuries following

200. VV 3; Fredegar 3.21.

201. VV 6.

202. Krusch 1893, 431.

203. Leman 1995, 174.

204. Leman 1995, 174–175; Krusch 1893, 432.

the fall of Rome. When read as a body of work, these saints' Lives reveal similar concerns and preoccupations: the interplay between monastic and secular authorities, the independence of monastic communities, the role of the abbot and the community, the relationship between bishops and royal power. In chapters 1–3, I look more closely at the context of Columbanus's legacy and what we know (or can reasonably say) about Jonas himself. Chapters 4–7 explore in considerably more detail different aspects of Jonas's hagiography and how he tried to communicate a subtle but specific programmatic message in all three of his saints' Lives.

But we must begin with Columbanus and his legacy, for Jonas cannot be understood without reference to the controversial Irish monastic founder and the monastic movement that he and his Frankish successors initiated in Merovingian Gaul at the turn of the seventh century.

Conflicting Visions of Community: The Legacy of Columbanus

COLUMBANUS PEREGRINUS

ON NOVEMBER 23, 615, THE IRISH ABBOT AND MONASTIC FOUNDER Columbanus died in a quiet valley of the Apennine mountains in northern Italy.¹ During the last year of his life, he had been busy helping his monks cut trees and roofing a ruined church that would be at the center of his new monastery of Bobbio. The monastery was built on a gentle slope above the river Trebbia and its impressive Roman bridge, the Ponte Gobbo, near the confluence of the Bobbio, a little stream from which the monastery took its name. For four square miles all around, the wooded hills and the lush valley of the Trebbia now belonged to Columbanus and his monks—the gift of the Lombard king, Agilulf (r. 590–616). Despite its secluded location in the foothills of the Apennines, the monastery stood at a nodal point between Pavia, the Lombard royal capital, and Rome, the seat of the papacy, in the imperial territories of Italy that had been reconquered by Justinian's armies in the mid-sixth century. Bobbio was also close to the border between the Lombard kingdom and the Ligurian coastal enclave still, until 643, under the authority of the Eastern Roman Empire.

Columbanus's death at Bobbio marked the culmination of a remarkable odyssey he had embarked upon twenty-five years before, when he left northern Ireland with a group of twelve monks (see map 2). Columbanus's superior, Abbot Comgall, had granted him permission to leave his monastery at Bangor on the southern shores of Belfast Lough along the northeast coast of Ireland in order to live the rest of his life as a *peregrinus* (an "ascetic exile") abroad.² The ritual of ascetic exile (*peregrinatio pro Christo*) in the Irish monastic tradition was a serious commitment whereby the monk chose to forgo the security of his monastery and the social bonds of his homeland by entrusting himself completely to God.³

1. Jonas notes that Columbanus spent a year helping to establish the new monastery before he died; VC 1.30. He mentions nothing of the charter of foundation issued by King Agilulf in Milan, tentatively dated to July 24, 613. On the foundation and history of Bobbio, see Richter 2008; Zironi 2004; Destefanis 2002; Gasparri forthcoming.

2. VC 1.4.

3. On the concept of *peregrinatio* as understood by the Irish, Charles-Edwards 1976; Stancliffe 1982; Johnston 2016. On Columbanus's self-identification as an ascetic exile, see O'Hara 2013.



Map 2. Columbanus's *peregrinatio* on the Continent.

By the time Columbanus left Ireland, he was already an exile within his own country.⁴ He had been born and raised in Leinster, a region in the south-east of the country, sometime in the mid-sixth century.⁵ Little is known about his family or social background, although he may have been a member of the royal Uí Bairrche dynasty, whose power base was in Leinster and which had connections with Bangor, the monastery where Columbanus became a monk. The Uí Bairrche king, Cormac mac Diarmata, who ruled for most of the second half of the sixth century, retired to the monastery of Bangor and granted lands to the monastery in Leinster.⁶ Columbanus's entry into monastic life at Bangor may have been in part politically expedient, as the Uí Bairrche dynasty was increasingly under pressure from rival dynasties competing for power in Leinster at this time.⁷ He came from a fledgling Christian society, as Ireland was, from the mid-fifth century, coming increasingly under the influence of the new religion, although this was still a period of religious change.⁸ Following his conversion to religious life, Columbanus left his native region for Ulster in northern Ireland, where he received biblical instruction under a certain Sinilis, a scriptural scholar. It is not certain whether this refers to Sinilis, abbot of Cluain Inis (Cleenish) in County Fermanagh, or to a man of the same name who was also known for his learning and later became abbot of Bangor, where Columbanus became a monk (probably the latter).⁹ Jonas notes that during this period of scriptural study, Columbanus wrote a commentary on the Psalms which no longer survives. Afterward, he formally entered the monastic life at Bangor (County Down), where he received his formation under the strict abbot and founder Comgall (d. 602).¹⁰ Columbanus may have been in charge of the monastic school there; he was certainly knowledgeable in the specialist field of *computus*, the science of calculating liturgical time.¹¹ It is not certain for how

4. The Irish distinguished between two levels of *peregrinatio*: one in which you left your native region and the other (*potior peregrinatio*, "greater ascetic exile") in which you left your country. Jonas is aware of these two levels in his story of Columbanus's meeting with the female anchorite in Ireland who encourages Columbanus to undertake *potior peregrinatio*; VC 1.3.

5. Jonas notes Columbanus's origin in Leinster (*Lagenorum terra*) in VC 1.3. On the dating of Columbanus's birth to around 550, see Bullough 1997, 2–3.

6. Ó Cróinín 2005a, 193–194.

7. See Ó Cróinín forthcoming.

8. As noted by Jonas in VC 1.2. For Columbanus's early education, see VC 1.3; and see Bullough 1997, 3. On the cultural context, see Bhreathnach 2018, forthcoming.

9. VC 1.3. This Sinilis has traditionally been identified as Sinell son of Mianach, who had a reputation for learning and was abbot of Cleenish in the later sixth century. The monastic site at Cleenish has recently been surveyed, with an enclosure identified. However, Ó Cróinín 1982 has argued that this Sinilis refers to the abbot of Bangor of the same name whose death is recorded in the Annals of Ulster *s.a.* 610.

10. VC 1.4; on Comgall, see Bullough 1997, 7–8.

11. Wetti, *Vita Galli confessoris triplex* 1. See also Ó Cróinín 1982.

long Columbanus remained in Bangor, but it was possibly as many as twenty years, as only experienced monks were granted permission to undertake ascetic exile. He was probably in his forties when he left Ireland, despite Jonas's assertion that he was only twenty, which appears to have been modeled on the *Life of Antony*.¹² To underline the apostolic nature of Columbanus's mission, Comgall entrusted him with twelve of his confrères whom he was to serve as their new abbot. The monks do not appear to have had fixed destination in mind when they set sail from Ireland in 590 or 591, although Columbanus may have been drawn to the Morbihan area of Brittany due to its associations as the burial place of the British saint Gildas.¹³

As exiles in a new and foreign environment, Columbanus and his monks had to operate through established networks of power. Paradoxically, according to Irish law, with his departure from Ireland, Columbanus's status had risen to the level of a regional king or bishop, although it is not unlikely that Columbanus was of royal background already, and this elevation of status only worked within Ireland.¹⁴ From an Irish perspective, it was the duty of a king to provide hospitality and protection for an ascetic exile such as Columbanus.¹⁵ On making land in Brittany, Columbanus and his monks traveled overland into the heartland of Gaul, although this may have been prompted by a Frankish military expedition into Brittany at around the same time and in the same area where Columbanus may have been based.¹⁶ This military expedition was initiated by King Guntram, the ruler of Burgundy, whose seat was at Chalon-sur-Saône and who was most likely the king who gave Columbanus and his monks permission to settle within his territories.¹⁷ In tandem with the Frankish rulers, Columbanus established three monastic communities in quick succession during the course of the 590s in the Vosges region at Annegray, Luxeuil, and Fontaine, all within a few miles of one another.¹⁸ The patronage of the Merovingian dynasty facilitated the initial success of these communities. New recruits joined, and Frankish noble families sent their sons to be educated there.¹⁹ Columbanus appears to have served as a spiritual adviser to the young Frankish king Childebert II (d. 596) and in turn

12. VC 1.4; see notes.

13. VC 1.4. On the dating, see Bullough 1997, 10. On Columbanus's links with Brittany and his period there in the Morbihan, see the interesting comments in Wood forthcoming.

14. See Ó Cróinín forthcoming for further discussion.

15. O'Hara 2013, 98; Charles-Edwards 1976, 53, with further references.

16. VC 1.5. See Wood forthcoming.

17. VC 1.6. Jonas's identification of the king as Sigibert I (d. 575) is certainly incorrect. It was more likely Guntram (d. 593) or his successor, Childebert II (d. 596), who ruled both Burgundy and Austrasia.

18. On the monastic foundations, see Wood 1998; O'Hara 2015.

19. VC 1.10.

to his son, Theuderic II (d. 613).²⁰ Tensions arose, however, when Columbanus interfered with the uneasy balance of power at court and refused to modify the monastic norms in his communities. He encouraged the teenage king Theuderic II to marry and produce legitimate children instead of conducting polygamous relationships. This jeopardized the leading position of Theuderic's grandmother, the dowager queen Brunhild, who felt threatened should Theuderic marry. Columbanus lost the support of his royal patrons when he refused to bless the illegitimate children of Theuderic.²¹

Columbanus also came into conflict with the Gallic bishops because he did not acknowledge that his monasteries should be under the authority of the local bishop.²² He also continued to celebrate Easter following a method for calculating this movable feast that was still current in Ireland but had been replaced by another system in Gaul.²³ This meant that in some years, Columbanus and his communities celebrated Easter on a different day from the local churches, and thus Columbanus was open to the charge of schism.²⁴ This was an issue of contention right from the beginning of his period in the region. From Columbanus's perspective, he was an ascetic exile and so outside the jurisdiction of the Gallic bishops.²⁵ He also did not recognize the authority of the bishops, some of whom had bought their offices and were having adulterous affairs with women.²⁶ Columbanus wrote directly to Pope Gregory the Great and to his successor to appeal for their intervention in the dispute with the bishops. He pleaded for tolerance and the right to practice his own traditions. When he was summoned to appear in council before the bishops at the Synod of Châlon in 603, Columbanus refused to appear and instead wrote a forthright letter rebutting their accusations and appealing directly to scripture.²⁷ Columbanus still had the protection of his royal benefactors, but when he came into conflict with them in 610, he and the senior, Insular members of his communities were banished from the kingdom. Theuderic ordered them to be deported; a military escort was to lead them to the Atlantic coast, where they were to be put on a ship back to Ireland.²⁸ When they arrived at the estuary of the Loire, whether through

20. VC 1.18.

21. The most dramatic and well-known episodes in Book 1 of the VC; VC 1.18–19. On Brunhild and the historical context, see Nelson 1986; Dumézil 2008; Dailey 2015.

22. *Ep.* 1 and 2. See Stancliffe 2006.

23. Columbanus makes this explicit in *Ep.* 1 to Pope Gregory the Great. On the Easter controversy in relation to Columbanus and for the context of this debate, see Charles-Edwards 2000, 364–365, and chapter 9 on the Paschal controversy; Corning 2006, 24–30.

24. Corning 2006, 25, with a table showing comparative Easter dates between 590 and 608.

25. *Ep.* 3.2.

26. *Ep.* 1.6.

27. *Ep.* 2.

28. VC 1.19.

the connivance of the guards, as Columbanus suggests in the remarkable letter he wrote to his monks in Burgundy,²⁹ or by some other means, Columbanus and his monks avoided deportation. They made their way north to Neustria—the northwestern Merovingian kingdom, to the court of Chlothar II, Theuderic’s uncle and rival.³⁰ He established contact with Chagneric and Authari, heads of the Faronids and the Gundoinids, powerful Frankish noble families whose sons and daughters would subsequently play an important part in the expansion of monastic foundations in the north and east of the kingdom.³¹

From the Meaux/Marne region, Columbanus continued east to Austrasia, the eastern Merovingian kingdom, to the court of Theudebert II (d. 612), Theuderic’s half-brother and rival. Theudebert gave Columbanus permission to settle in Alamannia, on the eastern borders of his kingdom.³² Columbanus navigated the Rhine as far as Lake Constance, where he established another monastery at Bregenz, which, like Luxeuil, was an old Roman town located at the intersection of an important road network.³³ According to Jonas and the later corpus of hagiography on Gallus, Columbanus’s Irish disciple who subsequently remained in the region as a hermit,³⁴ Columbanus encountered strong opposition from the local people, who persisted in traditional practices deemed pagan.³⁵

Columbanus also considered going farther east to preach to the pagan Slavs but instead decided to go south to Italy when the balance of power in Alamannia shifted in 612, when his patron, Theudebert II, was killed after being defeated by Theuderic II.³⁶ The latter’s overlordship briefly extended to Alamannia before he died at Metz from dysentery, after which his family was annihilated by Chlothar II (d. 629), who united the Merovingian kingdoms in 613.³⁷ By

29. *Ep.* 4. See Jonas’s more miraculous account in *VC* 1.23.

30. *VC* 1.24.

31. *VC* 1.26. On these noble families and their involvement in Columbanian monastic foundations, see Fox 2014, 64–89.

32. *VC* 1.27.

33. *VC* 1.27. The Latin poem *Carmen Navale*, which was once ascribed to Columbanus but is now thought to have been written by a Carolingian namesake, was inspired by this voyage up the Rhine. The poem is edited and translated in *SCO*, 190–192.

34. The hagiography on Gallus is edited as *Vita Galli confessoris triplex*. The site of Gallus’s hermitage in the Steinach valley grew into the monastery of St Gallen during the eighth century. Recent excavations have revealed an elite-status burial from the seventh century as well as the base of an early medieval round tower, for which see the contributions in Schmuki, Schnoor, et al. 2015. The arguments against Gallus’s historicity and Irish ethnicity are unconvincing; see Berschin 1975. On Gallus, see Schär 2012.

35. *VC* 1.27; *Vita Galli* Wetti, 4–8; *Vita Galli* Walahfrid Strabo, 4–8 (both in *Vita Galli confessoris triplex*).

36. *VC* 1.29.

37. *VC* 1.28, 29; Fredegar 4.42.

this time, Columbanus had found refuge at the Lombard court of Agilulf and Theodelinda in Milan, where he became involved in the complex theological dispute that divided the Church in Italy at this time. Members of the Lombard warrior elite were largely Arian Christian and thus would have been viewed as heretics because they did not believe in the divinity of Christ.³⁸ Columbanus preached against the Arian heresy in Milan and even wrote a treatise against it, which no longer survives.³⁹ Columbanus also entered the complex debate concerning what is known as the Three Chapters Schism, or the Aquileian Schism, which was a Byzantine (in every sense of the word) Christological controversy that began in the Byzantine Empire and spread to Italy, where it divided the Church, and which also provoked much opposition in Gaul.⁴⁰ In the mid-sixth century, the Byzantine emperor Justinian (d. 565) issued an edict in which the theological writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus, and Ibas of Edessa were condemned as heretical in an effort to appease opponents of the Council of Chalcedon. It had, in fact, the opposite effect, because it was seen in the west as an attack on the Council of Chalcedon, which had not condemned the theology of these three men. Queen Theodelinda, a Bavarian Catholic, and the Church in northern Italy were opposed to the condemnation of the Three Chapters and thus in schism with the papacy in Rome which had reluctantly ascribed to Justinian's edict under Pope Vigilius.⁴¹ Columbanus became involved in the conflict because he acted as a broker between the Lombard court and the papacy, urging (in his most remarkable surviving letter) Pope Boniface IV to resolve the conflict and to restore unity in the Church.⁴² Columbanus's views on the Three Chapters appear to have been in alignment with the majority in Francia (who did not go into schism with the papacy but opposed Justinian's condemnation of the Three Chapters and did not think highly of Pope Vigilius). The conflict would not be resolved until the Synod of Pavia in 698. In 613, Columbanus's amicable relationship with the Lombard monarchy was rewarded with the gift of four square miles of land at Bobbio in the foothills of the Apennine mountains, on a road network linking Pavia and Rome and not far from the Byzantine-controlled Ligurian coast.⁴³ Here Columbanus established his fifth and final monastery. By this time, he would have been in his

38. On Lombard Arianism, see Fanning 1981; Pohl 2000; Berndt and Steinacher 2014.

39. VC 1.30.

40. On the Three Chapters controversy, see Gray 1979; Chazelle and Cubitt 2007; Sotinel 1998.

41. On the controversy in Italy, see Sotinel 2007.

42. *Ep.* 5; see Bracken 2002. On Columbanus's involvement in the controversy, see Gray and Herren 1994; Cahill 1973.

43. Agilulf's charter of foundation is edited in Fissore and Olivieri 2001, no. 57: 61. On Bobbio's location on a communication network, see Nuvolone 2000.

mid-sixties, and he spent the last year of his life assisting his monks in felling trees to build the monastery and repairing the ruined basilica that would serve as their church.⁴⁴ As was his custom, he also would frequently retreat to the solitude of a hermitage in the mountains near Coli, which is prominently featured in a later miracle collection from the tenth century written by the Bobbio community.⁴⁵

A MIXED LEGACY

Columbanus's period of ascetic exile on the Continent was characterized in equal measure by success and failure. As a monastic founder, Columbanus established two monasteries—Luxeuil and Bobbio—that were to have a lasting impact on their host societies as vibrant centers of religious life, hubs of economic exchange, culture, and learning. He introduced a new and dynamic model of monastic foundation that sidestepped the oversight of bishops and provided the Frankish aristocracy with an attractive vehicle for establishing monasteries that could maintain control over their land while simultaneously providing for their salvation and enhancing their status. By seeking to remain independent from external authorities so that he could remain true to his vocation as an ascetic exile, Columbanus served as a catalyst for an explosion in monastic foundation that reconfigured the spiritual and economic topography of Merovingian Gaul. This was achieved through a close cooperation between the Merovingian royal court and Columbanus's monastery of Luxeuil, an interrelationship that marked a new symbiosis in how secular authorities and monastic groups related to each other.⁴⁶

Columbanus was also instrumental in spreading the popularity of tariffed penance, a system whereby Christians could repeatedly atone for their sins by confessing to a spiritual adviser that in time developed into the modern sacrament of penance practiced in the Roman Catholic Church. This system had been developed in British monastic circles in the sixth century and through them influenced Irish monastic tradition.⁴⁷ Columbanus championed this new method in his handbook of penance, which was written for both religious and the laity while he was in Burgundy.⁴⁸ An increasing concern with sin and how

44. VC 1.30.

45. *Miracula sancti Columbani*; on this important miracle collection, see O'Hara and Taylor 2013; Dubreucq and Zironi 2015, with a new edition and English translation.

46. O'Hara forthcoming; Fox 2014.

47. On early medieval penance and its development, see Meens 1998, 2008, 2014.

48. Columbanus, *Paenitentiale*, in SCO, 168–180; see Charles-Edwards 1997.

to remedy sin from this period came to influence not only religious practice but also norms of behavior, the exercise of political power, and mentalities.⁴⁹

As an author, Columbanus left behind a corpus of works—six letters, two monastic rules, a manual of penance, thirteen sermons, and two poems—that are our primary source of information about him as well as one of the most remarkable sources for this period.⁵⁰ His writings reveal a man who was fully engaged with the issues and the leading figures of his age. While Columbanus was successful at winning patronage and followers at the highest levels of society, his unwillingness to compromise and his autocratic style of leadership led to conflict both with those who had supported him and with those from within his own communities.

Columbanus's own writings clearly reveal the tensions already latent within his communities during his lifetime and what kind of communities he was attempting to build on the Continent. Jonas and his hagiography cannot be understood without first understanding Columbanus and his monasticism. While Jonas can be read as a source for Columbanus, Columbanus can equally be used as a source for Jonas. Jonas's silences and omissions reveal a great deal about his authorial intent. When read in relation to the evidence of Columbanus's own writings, these sources can illuminate aspects of Jonas's work.

Jonas was familiar with Columbanus's writings. It is more difficult to say to what extent he knew the whole corpus of the saint's letters, poems, sermons, monastic rules and *Penitential*, an exegetical work on the Psalms, and a treatise against the Arian heresy.⁵¹ There are ten echoes of Columbanus's writings in the VC, only five of which are explicit citations.⁵² Jonas had a good knowledge of Columbanus's writings, as he may have been the archivist at Bobbio and, as such, would have been responsible for preserving the saint's writings. When Athala received a letter from the renegade monk Agrestius, the abbot gave it to Jonas for safekeeping. Although Jonas kept it for many years, he confessed that he later lost it through his negligence (*postea mea neglegentia perdidit*).⁵³ He

49. See Brown 2000, 2015; Kreiner 2014a.

50. All are edited in SCO and studied in detail in Lapidge 1997. On the poems attributed to Columbanus, see also Herren 2001.

51. Both the commentary on the Psalms, which Columbanus wrote in Ireland, and the tract against the Arians, written in Milan, are now lost: VC 1.3 and 1.30: 158, 221. On the corpus of Columbanus's writings, see Walker 1970a; Smit 1971; Lapidge 1997. The current scholarly consensus is that the quantitative poems *Ad Sethum*, *Ad Hunaldum*, and *Columbanus Fidolio* cannot be ascribed to Columbanus (the poems have instead been attributed to a later, Carolingian Columbanus). For a review of the debate concerning the authorship of these poems and for a defense of Columbanian authorship, see Herren 2001.

52. Cited in Rosenwein 2006, 157 n. 122.

53. VC 2.9: 247–248, at 248.

had knowledge of the diplomatic documents granted to Bobbio by the Lombard kings. In his account of the foundation of Bobbio, he incorporated clauses from a charter of King Agilulf.⁵⁴ The use of such information suggests that Jonas had access to the community's archives. Jonas also, in one instance, used the term *micrologus*, an extremely rare Grecism meaning "someone of no significance or of little intellect," which Columbanus twice used in his letters.⁵⁵ Jonas explicitly referred to the saint's literary works on a number of occasions throughout the VC and directed the reader at the end of Book 1 to read the saint's own writings should he wish to know more about him.⁵⁶ Columbanus's writings reveal Jonas's silence on a number of important issues, and the most informative of these are the saint's letters.

TRIBULATIO ET PERSECUTIO PROPTER VERBUM: THE
EVIDENCE OF COLUMBANUS'S LETTERS

Together with the sermons, which reveal Columbanus's spirituality, his six surviving letters, written between 600 and 613, provide the best insight into the career and thought of the saint.⁵⁷ Like his formidable hero Jerome, Columbanus was an avid and gifted letter writer. Columbanus wrote more letters than have survived, as he and Jonas both mention works that are now lost. But the letters that do survive display both the same forceful brazenness and persuasive conviction as Jerome's and the ardent humanity of a weary and vulnerable man. They give us the most personal glimpse of Columbanus, while revealing the main issues and concerns that occupied him in his final years. When read in comparison with Jonas's account, they tell a somewhat different story. The two letters that Columbanus wrote to a synod of bishops assembled in Chalon-sur-Saône in 603 in lieu of attendance and to his community in the Vosges while awaiting deportation are fundamental for understanding Columbanus's expulsion from Burgundy in 610, the decisive turning point of his ascetic exile.

54. The phraseology of Jonas's *basilicam beati Petri apostolorum principis . . . Quem locum veterum traditio Bobium nuncupabant* (VC 1.30: 221) echoes that of Agilulf's foundation charter: CDB 3: 89. Noted by Richter 2008, 17–18.

55. VC 2.10: 251; Ep. 1.2: 2; Ep. 5.1: 36. See Walker 1949–1950.

56. VC 1.3, 30: 158, 221; VC 1.30: 224.

57. On the letters and dates of composition, see Wright 1997; Walker 1970a: xxxvi–xxxvii. For a new edition with Italian translation and commentary, see Nuvolone and Todde 2000. See also the excellent study by Leso 2013.

Columbanus's Epistula 4

Columbanus's fourth epistle, which he wrote in 610 near Nantes while awaiting deportation, has been described as "one of the most moving documents of early medieval history."⁵⁸ Addressed to his monks in Burgundy and to Athala, the community's prior, the missive is a stirring call for unity at a time of personal and institutional crisis. The absent abbot commanded the community to remain under Athala's authority and to persevere in the face of adversity.⁵⁹ He alluded to Christ's parable of the sower in declaring that "tribulation and persecution have arisen for the word's sake" and warned the monks not to become the stony ground of the parable.⁶⁰

Columbanus depicted a community under strain from both external and internal agents. The community was by this time sufficiently affluent to have aroused the envy of men whom Columbanus characterized as possessed by demons.⁶¹ These are presumably the same group Columbanus referred to when he addressed Athala directly. The abbot feared for Athala that "through the devil's tricks, they wish to divide you, if you do not keep peace with them; for now without me you seem to stand less firmly there."⁶² Columbanus was most likely alluding to the Gallic bishops, as he stated that the issue of disagreement was over Easter, an ecclesiastical matter on which Columbanus and the bishops had long been in conflict.⁶³ The Easter reckoning was of such importance that if Athala detected any dangers of disagreement over this, he was to leave the community and come join Columbanus on the coast.⁶⁴ It was on this issue that Columbanus feared the bishops would try to divide the community.

Unity is repeatedly stressed in the letter, and there are indications that within the community itself, there were unresolved problems. Columbanus told Athala to expel "those who are a trouble to your feelings," but in a way that was "in peace and agreement with the rule."⁶⁵ It appeared that Columbanus's organization of the monastic life was a contentious issue for some monks. Columbanus tellingly wrote that "we have been more harmed by those who were not of one mind amongst us"⁶⁶ and that he has felt "the desires of many to differ in respect

58. Charles-Edwards 2000, 358.

59. *Ep.* 4.2: 27.

60. *Ep.* 4.2: 27; *Matt.* 13: 21.

61. *Neque speretis quod homines per se vos persequantur; daemones sunt in his qui invident bonis vestris. Ep.* 4.2: 26.

62. *ne forte, diabolo insidiante, vos alienare velint, si cum eis pacem non teneatis: infirmius enim nunc sine me ibi stare videmini. Ep.* 4.3: 29.

63. See Stancliffe 2006.

64. *Ep.* 4.3: 29.

65. *Ep.* 4.3: 29.

66. *plus enim nobis nocuerunt qui apud nos unanimes non fuerunt. Ep.* 4.2: 29.

of maintaining the strictness of the rule.”⁶⁷ The impression is of Columbanus as a disillusioned and disappointed man whose efforts at “instilling character” (*indolis imbuendae*) have not been altogether successful.⁶⁸

Athala faced a community in crisis, having lost its abbot and the senior, Insular members of the community, and on the brink of division. This was in addition to the opposition Athala faced from the bishops who now tried to undermine him and the community. Columbanus feared that it might be too much for Athala, in which case he was to abandon the community and come seek his exiled abbot.⁶⁹ Jonas noted that when Columbanus reached the court of Theudebert in Austrasia following his expulsion from Burgundy, many of his monks from Luxeuil were waiting for him there. It is likely that Athala was among them, as he eventually succeeded Columbanus as abbot of Bobbio.⁷⁰ Columbanus’s departure from Luxeuil may have further splintered the remaining community into factions for and against some of the more draconian and doctrinal features of Columbanus’s monasticism. This crisis may only have been resolved by some of the monks leaving to follow their master.

Columbanus described Athala as “my true follower,”⁷¹ an ideological tag that Jonas also emphasized in his account of Columbanus’s successor.⁷² He mentioned that many of his monks were at odds over the strictness of the rule and that “in their frailty they have fallen from my small degree of strictness, that is, have departed from the truth of my instruction.”⁷³ For Jonas, what distinguished Athala was his faithful adherence to Columbanus’s teachings. It was obedience to the saint’s ethos that denoted a true follower of Columbanus.⁷⁴ Obedience was of paramount importance for Columbanus.⁷⁵ This meant conformity to his vision of the monastic life and to important doctrinal matters such as the correct method of calculating the date of Easter.

Columbanus’s letter is significant because it exposes tensions latent in the community during his lifetime. The expulsion of Columbanus and the Insular members had a considerable impact on the community. The evidence of this

67. *quia diversa sensi multorum vota ad firmitatem regulae retinendam*. Ep. 4.4.

68. Ep. 4.3.

69. Ep. 4.2: 29.

70. VC 1.27: 211.

71. Ep. 4.2: 27.

72. *Cumque ergo venerabilis Columba de hac luce migrasset, eius in locum Athala successus est omni religione laudabilis, cuius post magistrum virtutes clarae fulserunt, . . . per vestigia magistri secutus*. VC 2.1: 230.

73. *qui sui fragilitate a mea parva declinaverunt firmitate, id est a doctrinae recesserunt veritate*. Ep. 4.4: 31.

74. Ep. 4.4: 31.

75. On the concept of obedience in Irish monastic practice, see De Bhaldraithe 1983.

letter contrasts with the image of the early community that Jonas was at pains to present in the *VC*. This was of a group of hardened pioneers living a difficult rural existence, though one nonetheless ideal in terms of its communal camaraderie.⁷⁶ It resembled, in essence, the apostolic community in Jerusalem, the archetype of the monastic life.⁷⁷ Columbanus's own letter gives a somewhat different perspective.

Brunhild and the Bishops

There were more issues behind Columbanus's departure from Burgundy than Jonas wished to reveal. In the *VC*, the saint's expulsion from the Burgundian kingdom was attributed to his falling out with his royal patrons.⁷⁸ Jonas described in turn the saint's conflict with Brunhild over refusing to bless Theuderic's illegitimate children and his conflict with the king over his unwillingness to allow lay access to the inner confines of the monastery. Theuderic accused Columbanus of obstinately refusing to conform to standard ecclesiastical norms.⁷⁹ The finger of blame, however, was squarely pointed at Brunhild, the "second Jezebel," whose scheming is said to have turned the young king against the saint.⁸⁰ Both Brunhild and Theuderic were, however, convenient scapegoats as the villains of Columbanus's victimization, because both were by the 640s long dead and were vilified by the current Neustrian regime.⁸¹ Brunhild has even been called "the bugaboo of the Neustrian dynasty";⁸² she was clearly a key political player, and the manner in which she was brutally executed in front of Chlothar II's army in 613 and his attempts to efface her memory thereafter testify to her power. Following the assassination of her husband Sigibert I in 575, she had done her best to maintain her power and to ensure the succession of her family against persistent threats from her Merovingian in-laws. She was a key patron of Gregory of Tours, while Gregory the Great praised her for her support of religious foundations, although he grew increasingly frustrated that she would not convene a synod to deal with the problem of simony in her kingdom.⁸³ She must have been an important patron of Columbanus in the early days of the

76. See, e.g., *VC* 1.5: 161–162.

77. Jonas consciously sought to make this parallel in his implicit reference to Acts 4: 32. *VC* 1.5: 161. On the early Christian community in Jerusalem as an ideal model of the monastic life, see Leyser 2000, 10.

78. Chapters 18 and 19, the lead-up to Theuderic's decision to deport Columbanus back to Ireland, are the dramatic high points of the whole work.

79. *VC* 1.19: 190.

80. *VC* 1.18: 187.

81. See Wood 1994c, 196.

82. Rosenwein 2006, 149.

83. Gregory the Great, *Ep.* 8.4; 9.214; 11.46; 11.49; 13.5.

foundations, and the dedication of the abbey church at Luxeuil to Saint Peter may have come about by means of relics she acquired through Gregory the Great of Saints Peter and Paul.⁸⁴ Luxeuil's independence from the oversight of the local bishop may even have been due to Brunhild, who ensured the immunity of her foundations in Autun through privileges she sought from Gregory the Great.⁸⁵ Jonas's account is just one textual strand in her representation, and this needs to be borne in mind, especially given the political climate in the years following her death.⁸⁶ That said, however, given Brunhild's political situation at the time, there is little reason to doubt the dowager queen's role in orchestrating Columbanus's exit from Burgundy once she perceived him as a threat to herself and her plans for her family. But when the letters that Columbanus wrote to ecclesiastical leaders, particularly Epistula 2 to the Gallic bishops, are considered, the bishops may also have played a more prominent role in Columbanus's exile than Jonas cared to admit.

While the Church in late-sixth-century Gaul was undoubtedly more dynamic and vibrant than Jonas and Columbanus both depicted it,⁸⁷ there were, nevertheless, problematical issues in the governance of the Church, not the least being simony. We know that from very early on, Columbanus faced considerable opposition from the bishops. His earliest surviving letter addressed to Gregory the Great, written in around 600, implied that by this time, he already faced opposition over the issue of the dating of Easter. The letter was, in part, an appeal to Gregory to exonerate Columbanus's position: "I beg you to favour me with the support of your judgement, and not to scorn sending in good time the mark of your approval, for the quelling of this storm that surrounds us."⁸⁸ Gregory does not seem to have intervened in Columbanus's difficulties over Easter, but neither did he openly condemn Columbanus.⁸⁹ Columbanus was left to face the bishops alone and in 603 was summoned to a synod at Chalon that had been convened to deal with the question of the Easter controversy.⁹⁰ Columbanus

84. See Gregory the Great, *Ep.* 6.58.

85. Gregory the Great, *Ep.* 13.9–11.

86. See the excellent study by Thomas 2012.

87. Hen 2015; O'Hara and Wood 2017, 9–16.

88. *precor, tuae dirige fulcrum sententiae et mature punctum tuae placabilitatis huic tempestati nos circumdanti compescendae transmittere non dedigneris. Ep.* 1.4: 7.

89. Stancliffe 2006, 208, noted that Gregory did not openly condemn Columbanus and may have sent him a verbal message of support. It shows the closeness between Gregory and Columbanus that Columbanus asked the pope for guidance on how to deal with simoniac bishops. Stancliffe also suggested that Columbanus's correspondence with Gregory might have been one of the pope's sources of information on the Gallic Church and its abuses. The pope urged the Gallic bishops to stamp out abuses and to convene synods to deal with these issues. See Gregory the Great, *Ep.* 9.219, 9.782–790; Stancliffe 2006, 207; Markus 1997, 170–174.

90. *Ep.* 2.2.

brazenly refused to attend, as he probably guessed that the synod was intent on condemning him.⁹¹ Instead, he wrote a bombshell of a letter in which he defended himself while questioning the synod's moral authority to judge him. Columbanus had initially tried to reason with the bishops and to convince them that the method favored by the Irish was the correct way to calculate the date of Easter. He had even sent a treatise on Easter to the new metropolitan bishop of Lyons, Arigius, who now presided over the synod.⁹² His attempt to persuade them by reason had failed, and now he appealed to be simply left alone.

The heart of the issue was not about finding a solution to the correct method of calculating the date of Easter—Columbanus knew this—but about authority and where that authority lay. From the bishops' perspective, Columbanus was an impudent upstart who had broken Gallic ecclesiastical law in refusing to subordinate himself and his communities to the local diocesan.⁹³ His additional unwillingness to celebrate the feast of Easter at the same time as the Gallic Church was just a further instance of his intransigence. For Columbanus, the bishops were men of the world, simoniac adulterers compromised by their involvement in the seediness of Merovingian politics.⁹⁴ They did not have the moral authority to judge him, and Columbanus accorded them little respect.⁹⁵ He even associated them with the Pharisees.⁹⁶

The conflict in its essence reflected a gulf in Christian praxis between Columbanus and the bishops, the long-established leaders of the Church in Gaul.⁹⁷ From the beginning, Columbanus had sidestepped the bishops' authority. He was well aware of the trenchant problem of simony in the Gallic Church, a concern he shared with Pope Gregory the Great.⁹⁸ Columbanus's monasteries were situated near diocesan boundaries, while the altar he used in his monastery was consecrated by an Irish bishop who may have been part of Columbanus's entourage.⁹⁹ These were strategies by which he deliberately distanced himself from the Gallic episcopate. Columbanus's hauteur toward the bishops was undoubtedly a reflection of cultural differences, although synods

91. Columbanus's skepticism is hinted at in *Ep.* 2.7.

92. *Ep.* 2.5.

93. Columbanus intimates their view of him in *Ep.* 2.6. On Columbanus's contravention of canon law, see Stancliffe 2006, 208; Wallace-Hadrill 1983, 66. On the elite status of bishops in Late Antiquity and the extent of their power, see, e.g., Rapp 2000; Gauthier 2000; Hen 2015 (for a helpful overview of the Church in sixth-century Gaul and the role of bishops).

94. *Ep.* 1.6

95. *Ep.* 2.2; 2.4; 2.8.

96. *Ep.* 2.7: 21. On the even more hard-hitting subtext of the letter, see Wright 1997, 61–75.

97. Stancliffe 2006, 207.

98. *Ep.* 1.6; Gregory the Great, *Ep.* 8.4; 9.214; 11.46; 11.49; 13.5.

99. *Ep.* 4.4. Luxeuil was in the north of the diocese of Besançon. See Moyse 1973, 86.

were also crucial in the early Irish Church, and the bishop is the first mentioned of those who were elected to judge. Columbanus's reserve may be ascribed to the fact that in Ireland, abbots and leading ascetics had the same status as that of ordinary bishops and were entitled to sit with bishops on synods.¹⁰⁰ Abbots in Ireland were not subject to their local bishops.¹⁰¹ In Columbanus's view, monks and bishops were two distinct but parallel callings that were mutually exclusive.¹⁰² The Gallic bishops clearly saw things differently.

If the core issue of the conflict concerned authority, of which the Easter controversy was one aspect, the matter was further compounded by the fact that both parties drew their claims to authority from different sources. The bishops relied on legislative precedent, the rich prior canonical tradition of the Gallic Church. Columbanus relied on the universal precepts of the gospel. For Columbanus, the authority of the Bible was primary: "For these are our canons, the commands of the Lord and the apostles, in these our confidence is placed; these brought us from our native land; these here too we seek to maintain, though laxly."¹⁰³ By his faithful adherence to the teachings of the gospel, which were contrary to the lifestyles of some of the bishops,¹⁰⁴ Columbanus was above the authority of the bishops. He outlined that the authority and example of the scriptures were above those of their episcopal powers. He was, by his rigid imitation of Christ and adherence to scriptural teaching, beyond their jurisdictional scope. He pleaded for toleration and simply to be left alone.¹⁰⁵

Columbanus's cleverness in appealing to the higher authority of scripture was something the bishops could not gainsay. Columbanus knew this, and it was, in the end, his greatest strength.¹⁰⁶ This emphasis on the authority of the Bible and the difference in terms of cultural approach can be seen from the later eighth-century Irish canon law collection, the *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*, which cites nearly a thousand passages from the Bible.¹⁰⁷ In comparison, the Gallic canon law collection, the *Vetus Gallica*, compiled around the same time as the synod of Chalon, contains a mere five references to the Bible.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, Columbanus's opponent, Bishop Arigius, may have been responsible for

100. Stancliffe 2006, 210.

101. Stancliffe 2005, 419–420.

102. *Ep.* 2.8.

103. *Hi sunt enim nostri canones, dominica et apostolica mandata, in his fides nostra est; haec arma, scutum et gladius, haec apologia; haec nos moverunt de patria; haec et hic servare contendimus, licet tepide.* *Ep.* 2.6: 17–19.

104. See *Ep.* 2.2

105. *Ep.* 2.5: 17.

106. Stancliffe 2006, 214.

107. Stancliffe 2006, 212.

108. Stancliffe 2006, 207

compiling the collection.¹⁰⁹ In this context, it is interesting that the compiler was concerned with the correct relationship between an abbot and his bishop and stipulated that the abbot should be subject to his local bishop.¹¹⁰

While Columbanus and the bishops differed in their claims to moral authority, it is unlikely that the bishops alone played the decisive role in his banishment. The bishops were, at this point in 603, powerless to persecute Columbanus over what must have been seen as a humiliating snub. Columbanus was still nominally under the protection of the royal family. Even when he finally came into conflict with his royal benefactors in 610, it is unlikely that the bishops played a significant role in his banishment.

The initiative to banish Columbanus was politically motivated and appears to have been orchestrated by Brunhild. This becomes clear when additional evidence relating to the events of the Synod of Chalon of 603 is taken into account. At the synod, the bishops deposed one of their own members, Bishop Desiderius of Vienne, who was sent into exile. Like Columbanus, Desiderius had fallen out of favor for criticizing Theuderic's sexual behavior. Brunhild may have hoped to have both Columbanus and Desiderius exiled by means of the synod. It seems likely that the synod was orchestrated by Brunhild with the intent of condemning both men. This was, perhaps, why Columbanus refused to attend. In Desiderius's case, the bishop was faced with trumped-up charges of rape. Brunhild and Bishop Arigius, a close ally of the queen, were the architects behind this. When Desiderius returned from exile in 607, he was stoned to death at the instigation of Arigius and Brunhild.¹¹¹ Desiderius's fate made Columbanus's refusal to attend the synod seem all the more canny. While Columbanus continued to be supported by King Theuderic II, Brunhild had to wait until Columbanus refused to bless the king's illegitimate children before she could take more direct action.

Even if Jonas's view needs to be balanced with the generally more positive one of Brunhild in Gregory the Great's letters, Jonas may well have been right in his characterization of Brunhild as the main culprit behind Columbanus's banishment.¹¹² Courtiers such as Warnachar, the powerful Frankish noble and later mayor of the palace, may also have played a role in the expulsion of Columbanus;

109. Stancliffe 2006, 207.

110. Stancliffe 2006, 211–212, citing *Collectio Vetus Gallica*, canons xlv–xlvi. On the *Vetus Gallica*, see Mordek 1975.

111. The details of these events are found in Sisebut, *Vita Desiderii episcopi Viennensis*, and Fredegar 4.32, as no acts from the council survive. On the *Vita Desiderii* and Sisebut, the Visigothic king who wrote the work, see Fontaine 1980; Hen 2010.

112. On more positive and nuanced assessments of Brunhild, see Dailey 2015; Thomas 2012; Dumézil 2008.

Warnacher later betrayed Brunhild and was openly hostile to Eustasius.¹¹³ This was a conflict about dynastic power politics, not ecclesiastical misdemeanors. Brunhild and the bishops should not be seen as separate aggressors toward Columbanus but as essentially the same faction. It was Brunhild's initiative to exile Columbanus because he threatened her position at court by his criticism of Theuderic's failure to marry.

While the bishops did not play a leading role in Columbanus's banishment from the Burgundian kingdom, it is unquestionable that the Easter controversy was a defining feature of his period in Burgundy. It was of immense importance for the abbot. It is also clear that the Gallic bishops presented a persistent menace to Columbanus. Yet both aspects are absent from Jonas's account. Did Jonas consciously omit these issues precisely because they had been so divisive within the Burgundian communities? By the time Jonas wrote in the early 640s, the monk-bishops recruited from Luxeuil or from the Neustrian court were leading patrons of the Columbanian communities. The image of Columbanus that his hagiographer sought to portray was of a saint whose orthodox credentials were impeccable. By airing the saint's doctrinal differences and the condemnation of the bishops, Jonas might have tarnished the orthodox image of Columbanus that it was his task to (re)construct. Moreover, by this time, both Luxeuil and Bobbio had adopted the Victorian *computus* the very method of calculating the date of Easter that Columbanus had been so opposed to.¹¹⁴ Indeed, Jonas's *VJ* opens with a dating clause added by another scribe that notes: "In the one hundredth year after the completion of the calculation of the holy bishop Victorius, which began another [Easter] cycle."¹¹⁵ This unusual reference to the Easter table (*ciclus recapitulatio*) of Victorius in which Jonas's visit to Réomé is dated in terms of one hundred years after the formulation of Victorius's *computus* is clear evidence that by the mid-seventh century, the Columbanian communities had abandoned the Easter reckoning favored by Columbanus.

The Three Chapters Schism

The Three Chapters controversy was another of Columbanus's doctrinal views ignored by Jonas. Columbanus became involved in the dispute on his arrival in Lombard Italy in 612, although he would have been aware of it already in Burgundy, where it was also an issue for the Gallic Church.¹¹⁶

113. Fredegar 4.42; VC 2.9: 249.

114. Wood 1982, 72; Krusch 1884, 132.

115. *VJ* 326. It is unlikely, however, that Jonas wrote this short prologue. See the notes in O'Hara and Wood 2017.

116. On Columbanus and the dispute, see Gray and Herren 1994; Cahill 1973.

He entered a society that was politically and religiously divided, as Italy was partitioned into Lombard- and Byzantine-controlled territories further marked by religious sectarianism. Columbanus encountered Arian heretics and schismatic Catholics, adherents of the Three Chapters, at the Lombard court in Milan. He may have learned of the details of the dispute from Bishops Agrippinus of Como and Secundus of Trent, who were supporters of the Aquileian cause at court.¹¹⁷ The Lombard queen, Theodelinda, was also a schismatic, and Columbanus's shared stance on the Three Chapters may have been an important factor in his gaining royal support.¹¹⁸ Although her husband, King Agilulf, was pagan, Theodelinda was committed to the Aquileian cause, as her correspondence with Pope Gregory the Great makes clear.¹¹⁹

The letters again reveal a side of Columbanus not found in Jonas's account: in this case, Columbanus's disagreement with Rome over this thorny theological debate. Columbanus's letter to Pope Boniface IV, written in 613 from Milan at the request of Agilulf and Theodelinda, is his longest and most complex letter.¹²⁰ It was a call for unity within the Church, an appeal to resolve the divisions brought about by the papacy's condemnation of the Three Chapters and to reassert its doctrinal orthodoxy, which had been tarnished as a consequence of the dispute.¹²¹ Columbanus wrote as an outsider, and this made him an ideal arbitrator for the Lombard king and queen.¹²² Columbanus's letter coincided with Lombard peace agreements with the Byzantines. Bishop Secundus of Trent, an influential figure at court and a supporter of the Aquileian cause, had died in 612. Secundus's death marked a softer approach by the Lombards to the Three Chapters dispute, and initiatives were made to conclude peace agreements with both the Franks and the Byzantines.¹²³ Columbanus thus acted as a go-between in an effort to establish closer links with the papacy, long seen by the Lombards as an agent of Byzantine imperial claims in the peninsula. The granting of the site of Bobbio—in the borderlands close to Byzantine-held territories and on an important communication network linking Pavia and Rome—may have come

117. *Ep.* 5.3: 38; Pohl 2007.

118. On Theodelinda, see Balzaretto 1999; Richter 2008, 34.

119. Columbanus described Agilulf as a *rex gentilis* and gave the impression that the king might be willing to convert to Christianity if the Three Chapters situation was resolved. *Ep.* 5: 45. On Theodelinda's adherence to the Aquileian cause, see Gregory the Great, *Ep.* 4.2; 4.4; 4.33.

120. *Ep.* 5: 36–56. On the subtleties and rhetorical strategies used by Columbanus in this letter and for the wider context, see Bracken 2002; Leso 2013.

121. *Ep.* 5.17: 57.

122. See *Ep.* 5.11: 49; 5.14: 53.

123. *HL* 4.40: 168; Gray and Herren 1994, 169.

about because of Columbanus's role as a mediator between the Lombard court and the papacy.¹²⁴

Jonas mentioned nothing of Columbanus and the Three Chapters controversy, yet it was ironically the subject of one of his criticisms of the rebel monk Agrestius, who accused Columbanus and his monastic practices of being heretical at the Synod of Mâcon in 626/627.¹²⁵ In this respect, Agrestius's views were closer to Columbanus's—at least with regard to the Three Chapters—than those of the saint's professed disciples.¹²⁶

THE TRAINING OF ALL TRAININGS: COLUMBANUS'S MONASTICISM

While the letters show the most personal side of Columbanus and expose the editing touch of Jonas, the saint's other writings—his sermons, rules, *Penitential*, and poems—provide the best insight into his thoughts and views on the monastic life.¹²⁷ Columbanus had a radical understanding of and a literal approach to living the Christian life that was translated into the way he organized his monastic communities. He codified his concept of the monastic life in two rules, the *Regula monachorum* and the *Regula coenobialis*, which he wrote for his Burgundian communities. Both of these texts and his *Penitential* are testaments to Columbanus's elite and punitive form of monasticism. They are, in keeping with their author, draconian, autocratic, and unwavering in their ascetic severity. To understand these texts and Columbanus's concept of the monastic life, it is essential first of all to know something of Columbanus's thought and the concepts that shaped him and his monasticism. Central to this was the concept of ascetic exile.

Ascetic exile (*peregrinatio*), as understood by the Irish, substantially shaped how Columbanus conceived of his own identity and the world he found himself in when he arrived on the Continent.¹²⁸ By undertaking ascetic exile, an act that

124. On Bobbio's foundation, see CDB 3: 89; Destefanis 2002; Richter 2008, 13–23; Zironi 2004, 9–11.

125. VC 2.9: 247.

126. Wood 1994c, 196; Dumézil 2007.

127. On Columbanus's monasticism, see Stancliffe 2011; de Vogüé 2004; Brown 2015, 188–193; Stancliffe 1997 on the sermons.

128. Jonas shows that he was familiar with the two degrees of *peregrinatio* in his account of Columbanus's encounter with the female anchorite. One could be a *peregrinus* in Ireland, although leaving one's country was seen as the higher form of *peregrinatio*: VC 1.3, 156–157. See Angenendt 1982, 52–53; O'Hara 2013. Columbanus explicitly identifies himself as a *peregrinus* a number of times in his writings. See, for example, his letter to Pope Gregory where he says that he is writing to him “more as a stranger than a savant” (*magis peregrino quam sciolo*) or his letter to the bishops where he tells them that it was “for the sake of Christ the Saviour . . . that I have entered these lands a pilgrim” (*pro Christo salvatore . . . in has terras peregrinus processerim*). Ep. 1.4: 7; Ep. 2.6: 17.

was considered such an extreme form of asceticism by the Irish that it was on a par with martyrdom,¹²⁹ Columbanus essentially cut the umbilical cord that tied him to normal social bonds.¹³⁰ This aloofness or detachment indelibly shaped Columbanus's monasticism. Ascetic exile gave the middle-aged monk an opportunity to create his ideal community.¹³¹ Columbanus was familiar with the monastic philosophy of John Cassian to know that separation from the world was possible through the conquering of oneself and the purging of sexual desire.¹³² But what was novel about Columbanus was his conviction that this would work by following a regulated monastic regime of considerable difficulty. "This is in fact the training of all trainings and at the price of present sorrow it prepares the pleasure of unending time," he told his monks in one of his sermons.¹³³ The monastery, for Columbanus, was still a place where the individual could seek God through prayer and contemplation, but it was, above all, a purgative arena in which the dross of sin could be stripped from the soul. The purgation of sin through penance, prayer, and mortification lies at the core of Columbanus's monastic experiment, which could be traced back to the "Gallic consensus" of the fifth century and such thinkers as Faustus of Riez and John Cassian.¹³⁴

The frenetic energy with which Columbanus pursued his ascetic exile and the starkness of his vision of the monastic life may also have been fueled by a strong eschatological belief in the imminence of the Last Days.¹³⁵ Like Pope Gregory the Great, Columbanus saw in the contemporary political and religious instability tangible evidence for the approaching end of the world. He wrote to Boniface IV of how "already we stand almost at the end in the midst of perilous times. See, the nations are troubled, the kingdoms are moved; therefore soon shall the Most High utter His voice, and the earth shall be shaken."¹³⁶ Ten years before, in 603, he had counseled the worldly Gallic bishops, "and while the Day of Judgment is now nearer than it was, you might embark upon some still severer precept of the evangelical religion and apostolical tradition; for if you carefully consider the commandments of the gospel, I am not surprised that they are found to contain contraries to some men's characters."¹³⁷

129. Columbanus would have seen it as a form of martyrdom. See, e.g., *Instructio* 10.2: in *SCO*, 103. On Irish concepts of bloodless martyrdom, see Stancliffe 1982.

130. On the legal status of the *peregrinus*, see Charles-Edwards 1976.

131. Brown 2003, 247.

132. On Cassian's monasticism, see, e.g., Rousseau 1995; Stewart 1998; Chadwick 2008; Leyser 2000, 33–61.

133. *Quae etiam disciplina disciplinarum est, quaeque aeterni temporis iucunditatem et aeterni gaudii amoenitatem praesenti merore comparat*. Columbanus, *Instructio* 4.1: in *SCO*, 79.

134. Brown 2015, 187.

135. On apocalyptic fears during this period, see Landes 1988; McNamara 1996a, 2003; Palmer 2014.

136. *Ep.* 5.7: 43.

137. *Ep.* 2.2: 13. *Contraria* is plural and may be explained by the *Penitential of Vinnian* 28, a text known to Columbanus. I am grateful to Thomas Charles-Edwards for this information.

At this time, when Europe was “in her decay,”¹³⁸ the monastery became the salvific space where souls could best prepare for the afterlife.

Columbanus’s experience of ascetic exile and his vocation of alienation, his acute sense of sin and ways to remedy this, and his sense of the imminent end of the world are central to understanding the paradigm of the monastic life that he sought to impose on his communities. This paradigm undoubtedly drew heavily on Columbanus’s monastic formation in Ireland but must also have been influenced by these particular aspects of his own experience and convictions.¹³⁹ Columbanus’s vision of the monastic life and how it was to be led was codified in the *Regula monachorum* and the *Regula coenobialis*, which may have initially been written as one rule. Columbanus wrote these normative texts while still in Burgundy. While the two rules are quite different, they encapsulate Columbanus’s monastic philosophy.¹⁴⁰

The *Regula monachorum* is a short treatise in ten chapters which has been characterized as a “series of meditative essays on the control of the self, and the character of the ideal monk.”¹⁴¹ The topics covered range from obedience and silence to chastity and mortification. The Rule primarily concerned the individual monk and is a fairly general document on the monastic virtues.¹⁴² Although this is, on the whole, the case, Columbanus also stipulated practical regulations concerning diet and communal prayer that were to be followed by the community: “Let the monks’ food be poor and taken in the evening, such as to avoid repletion, and their drink such as to avoid intoxication, so that it may both maintain life and not harm; vegetables, beans, flour mixed with water, together with the small bread of a loaf lest the stomach be burdened and the mind confused.”¹⁴³ He was similarly particular when it came to the liturgy, the chapter on which is the longest and most detailed of the rule. Columbanus’s statement to let a monk “come weary to his bed and sleep walking, and let him be forced to rise while his sleep is not yet finished,” was literally true.¹⁴⁴ The demands of communal prayer, which varied in length according to the seasons, were such that the eight offices every three hours left little time for sleep. In the *Regula*

138. *Ep.* 1.1: 3.

139. See Stancliffe 2011.

140. Both Rules are edited and translated in Walker 1970a, 122–168. See Stevenson 1997; Diem forthcoming.

141. Stevenson 1997, 206.

142. Stevenson 1997, 206. See also Diem 2005, 250; Walker 1970a, xlvii.

143. *RM* 3: 126–127.

144. *RM* 10, 141. Stevenson 1997, 209, illustrates the daily hours of the divine office that left little time for sleep.

coenobialis, the penalty for a monk who was too slow in coming to choir was a severe fifty lashes.¹⁴⁵

The *Regula coenobialis* is longer at fifteen chapters than the *Regula monachorum* and deals with the penalties that were to be inflicted on monks who broke its commands. While the *Regula monachorum* largely dealt with the internal disposition of the monk, the *Regula coenobialis* concerned the monk's conduct within the community. The focus of this Rule was on regulating the strict ritual of communal life and is the principal source for what life was like in the early Columbanian community. This was a strictly regulated and ritualized community. Confession was to be made regularly each day, especially "before meals or before entering our beds,"¹⁴⁶ while for the nuns at Faremoutiers, confession was required three times a day.¹⁴⁷ Columbanus was particularly harsh when it came to bad table manners: "Thus him who has not kept grace at table and has not responded Amen, it is ordained to correct with six blows. . . . And him who has not blessed the spoon with which he sups, and him who has spoken with a shout, that is, has talked in a louder tone than the usual, with six blows."¹⁴⁸ Even the most mundane actions, such as entering or leaving a building, were imbued with ritual.¹⁴⁹ The monks had to wear chrismals that contained the consecrated host. A variety of penalties were prescribed for those who lost or damaged the host. These included the remarkable provision that if a worm had entered the chrismal through neglect but the host was still intact, the monk was to "burn the worm with fire and hide its ashes in the earth near the altar, and himself do penance forty days."¹⁵⁰ Jane Stevenson remarked that "The most common problem which the community faced, if this *regula* is anything to go by, were related to anger and failure of absolute obedience."¹⁵¹ While these Rules were added to and developed over time (they were works in progress), both testify to the punitive nature of Columbanus's monasticism and are indicative of the draconian regime that he sought to implement in his communities. Together with his *instructiones*, or sermons, they encapsulate Columbanus's views on the monastic life. As Peter Brown has remarked on Columbanus's sermons: "Reading them, we find ourselves at the ground zero of a mighty spiritual detonation."¹⁵² But this was a controlled detonation whose ripples we can follow in other Columbanian

145. *RCoen.* 14: 163.

146. *RCoen.* 1: 145.

147. *VC* 2.19: 272.

148. *RCoen.* 1: 147.

149. See, e.g., *RCoen.* 3: 147–149.

150. *RCoen.* 15: 163.

151. Stevenson 1997, 207.

152. Brown 2015, 188.

Rules that adapted or went against the type of monastic life that Columbanus codified. There was even an adaptation of the Rule made for a women's community (not written by Columbanus) which shows that there was engagement and adaptation of these texts within the wider Columbanian *familia*.¹⁵³

The *Penitential* is the third piece of Columbanus's monastic legislation.¹⁵⁴ This manual of penance set out in considerable detail the various penances that were to be imposed for a wide range of sins. The work, addressed not only to monks but also to the clergy and the laity, was composed in parts at different times by Columbanus and would appear to predate the *Regula coenobialis*, with which it shares a number of features.¹⁵⁵ It drew on existing penitential thinking, particularly that of the monastic author Bishop Vinnian of Movilla.¹⁵⁶ Columbanus acknowledged at the beginning of the work that he was following a scheme as "handed down by the holy fathers."¹⁵⁷

The system of tariffed penance, by which every sin could be atoned for by an appropriate punishment, developed in monastic circles in western Britain and Ireland during the sixth century. With Columbanus and his *Penitential*, this practice was introduced to the Continent. Although earlier Christian writers such as Augustine and Cassian had realized the importance of accounting for all sins, both mortal and venial, it was the clinical precision that Insular moral teachers brought to the problem of sin that marked a "revolution in the old forms of pastoral supervision."¹⁵⁸ The success of tariffed penance lay in the sinner's ability to repeat the ritual of penance that served to mark the individual's reintegration into the Christian community.

Columbanus stipulated exacting and lengthy penances for a plethora of sexual, social, and institutional misdemeanors. The canons range from prescribing penalties for sexual acts such as bestiality and homosexuality to social sins such as homicide, infanticide, and theft. Even the institutional faux pas of those who left the monastic enclosure open during the night¹⁵⁹ or those with nudist tendencies were addressed in detail: "But if any, even while sitting in the bath, has uncovered his knees or arms, without the need for washing dirt, let

153. See Pseudo-Columbani, *Regula monialium*; Diem 2016a.

154. Walker 1970a, 169–181.

155. Walker 1970a, lii–lv; Charles-Edwards 1997 discusses the complex textual issues of this work and that not all of it was by Columbanus.

156. Charles-Edwards 1997, 219.

157. *Paenitentiale* 1: 169. On the penitential of Vinnian of Movilla, see Dumville 1984.

158. Walker 1970a, lii. On the development of early medieval systems of penance, see Brown 2003, 255–257; 2000; de Jong 2000; Meens 2014; Vogel 1952.

159. *Paenitentiale* 26: 179.

him not wash for six days, that is, let that immodest bather not wash his feet until the following Lord's Day."¹⁶⁰

The *Penitential*, like the *Regula coenobialis*, was equally specific concerning penalties for monastic offenses. It reveals some of the problems with which a monastic community was beset and the harsh measures that were in place to combat recalcitrant monks. In the first part of the work addressed to monks, Columbanus treated such issues as sodomy, fornication, masturbation, theft, perjury, assault, and the vomiting of the host as a result of overeating or overdrinking.¹⁶¹ These he referred to as "ordinary cases" (*causis casualibus*). As in the *Regula coenobialis*, he was similarly concerned with addressing the disruptive effects caused by anger in the community and with ensuring reverence for the consecrated host. "If any has struck his brother in a quarrel and spilt blood, let him do penance three years," Columbanus declared, while the monk who vomited the host while drunk was to do penance for forty days.¹⁶²

More serious for Columbanus were sins of "disorderly characters" (*morum inconditorum*): self-will, murmuring, slander, pride, speaking evil of the rule—everything that undermined the community. Again, he addressed the problem of insubordination and pride: "He who has despised his immediate superior in pride, or has spoken evil of the rule, is to be cast out, unless he has said immediately, I am sorry for what I said; but if he has not truly humbled himself, let him do penance forty days, because he is infected with the disease of pride."¹⁶³ In the next canon, he stipulated that the proud should be imprisoned. In this Columbanus anticipated Luxeuil's use as a detention center for political prisoners in the later seventh century, when the Neustrian mayor of the palace, Ebroin, and his enemy, Bishop Leudegar of Autun, were both incarcerated in Luxeuil.¹⁶⁴ But the significance of Columbanus's *Penitential* lies in the fact that it was concerned with the wider Christian community. There was a broader pastoral element in the establishment of Columbanus's monasteries that is often overlooked.¹⁶⁵

160. *Si quis vero etiam sedendo in lumento genua aut brachia discooperuerit absque necessitate luti lavandi, VI diebus non lavet, id est usque ad alteram diem dominicam inhonestus esse lavator pedes non lavet. Paenitentiale* 28: 181.

161. *Paenitentiale* 3–8: 169–171.

162. *Si quis percusserit per rixam fratrem suum et sanguinem fuderit, III annis paeniteat. Paenitentiale* 5, 6: 171.

163. *Qui autem per superbiam suum praepositum dispexerit aut regulam blasphemaverit, foras repellendus est, nisi confestim dixerit, Paenitet me quod dixi; si autem se non bene humiliaverit, XL diebus paeniteat, quia superbiae morbo detinetur. Paenitentiale* 11: 171.

164. *Liber Historiae Francorum* 45: 317; *Passio Leudegarii episcopi Augustodunensis* I I 12, 13: 294–296. See de Jong 2001.

165. See O'Hara 2015.

THE *REGULA COLUMBANI*

Albrecht Diem has queried whether the *Regula Columbani* mentioned by Jonas in the VC and in other hagiographic and diplomatic sources was actually the same thing as the rules written by Columbanus.¹⁶⁶ He understands the term as referring to a more general process linked to the founding of monasteries by aristocrats and with maintaining the privileged status of these monasteries against lay and episcopal interference. Columbanian monasticism relied on three interrelated factors for its development: “an abstract, not even necessarily codified *regula*,” coupled with the internal obedience of its members and the cooperation of the lay community.¹⁶⁷ The sketchy and unsystematic nature of both of Columbanus’s Rules, he argues, could hardly have served as the programmatic texts for the extensive monastic network that developed during the course of the seventh century.¹⁶⁸

Diem analyzed the contexts in which the twelve occurrences of the term *regula Columbani* appear in the VC as well as the twenty further references to such terms as *regula*, *norma*, *disciplina regularis*, *tenor regularis*, and *regulariter*.¹⁶⁹ He found that eleven of the twelve references to the *regula Columbani* occurred in relation to the foundation of Columbanian monasteries by nobles. The aristocrat Romaric, for example, after he had received instruction in Luxeuil, founded Remiremont on his own property, “in which he gave the rule of the blessed Columbanus to be observed” (*in quo et regulam beati Columbani custodiendam indidit*).¹⁷⁰ The exception to such instances was the case of the rebel monk, Agrestius, whose attack on Columbanian practices was termed as *adversum regulam beati Columbani*.¹⁷¹ Diem acknowledged that in two other instances, it was clear that Jonas referred to a written text.¹⁷² In the case of Columbanus’s debacle with Brunhild and Theuderic, Jonas depicted the Merovingian queen as challenging the *status regulae* of the Burgundian communities, while Columbanus warned the king that if he threatened the *disciplina regularis*, he and his family would be destroyed.¹⁷³ The second instance is in Jonas’s account of Abbot Bertulf of Bobbio’s attempt to secure a papal privilege that prevented the local bishop of Tortona from infringing on the jurisdictional autonomy of

166. Diem 2002, 2007a, 527–529.

167. Diem 2007a, 558.

168. Diem 2002, 64–65; 2007, 528.

169. Diem 2002, 67–71.

170. VC 2.10: 252.

171. VC 2.9: 249.

172. Diem 2002, 69.

173. VC 1.19: 190.

Bobbio. Jonas noted that when Bertulf met Pope Honorius in Rome, the abbot was asked to explain the customs of the Rule.¹⁷⁴

In the majority of instances, however, Jonas's use of *regula Columbani*, *regula*, and similar terms occurs in conjunction with the founding of monasteries. Diem's conclusion was that Jonas did not have in mind the written *Rules of Columbanus* when he referred to the *regula Columbani* but was thinking of a general concept of Columbanian monasticism. This was a more general notion than any specific internal monastic program. It manifested itself in the foundation of monasteries by nobles in cooperation with Columbanus's disciples, in the inaccessibility of monastic space from the secular and ecclesiastical authorities, and in the performance of intercessory prayer.¹⁷⁵ If a written version of this abstract *regula* existed, it was to be found not in the *Regula monachorum* or the *Regula coenobialis* but in the VC itself.¹⁷⁶ Many of the features Diem sees as constituting the *regula Columbani* are evident in Jonas's text, which shows little trace of Columbanus's two written Rules.¹⁷⁷ Ian Wood expressed similar views. Saints' lives such as the *Life of Antony* and the *Life of the Jura Fathers* could contain detailed commentaries on a saint's legislation or on the particular way of life followed in a community.¹⁷⁸ Wood also noted the discrepancies between some of Jonas's accounts of the early Columbanian community and Columbanus's legislation. Columbanus was very specific about diet. There was to be only one meal a day, in the evening, and this was to consist of some vegetables and bread.¹⁷⁹ Yet Jonas mentioned that Columbanus permitted his monks to eat wild fowl and fish.¹⁸⁰ This led Wood to query whether "these are deliberate citations of traditions introduced by Columbanus's successors but not included in the additions to his monastic legislation."¹⁸¹ There may be a simpler explanation, however. The instances mentioned by Jonas all occurred during the early days of the community. This was when there was a severe shortage of food. The situation was so serious that some of the monks even ate tree bark,¹⁸² while Columbanus mentioned that seventeen members of his community died in the first twelve years in Burgundy.¹⁸³ In such circumstances, Columbanus may have

174. *Cui cum rei causam patefecisset, ille de industria quaerit, quae sit consuetudo regularis disciplinae.* VC 2.23: 82.

175. Diem 2002, 71.

176. Diem 2007a, 528.

177. Diem 2002, 67.

178. Wood 1982, 66.

179. *RM* 3: 127.

180. VC 1.11: 170–172; 1.27: 215.

181. Wood 1982, 66.

182. VC 1.7: 164.

183. *Ep.* 2.6: 16.

been more lenient on such matters, while, as in the *RB*, meat may have been occasionally permitted on feast days and on special occasions. The difference between what Jonas reported and what Columbanus stipulated need not imply new customs. The inner and outer precincts of the monastic enclosure are also a case in point, since they are well attested archaeologically in Ireland and are likely to have formed part of the rule of life brought from Bangor; they would not have needed to be stipulated in a written text.

Although the term *regula* in the Early Middle Ages need not in all cases imply a written text and can refer to a rule of communal life actually being followed (behavior according to a rule need not be behavior according to a written rule),¹⁸⁴ Columbanus clearly wrote and intended his two Rules to be followed. It is obvious from other works from the same period, such as the *Regula Benedicti* and the *Regula Magistri*, that these rules were prescriptive and detailed texts. Such texts set out a program for how the monastic life was to be lived in their respective communities. Although Columbanus's legislation was much less detailed than that of either Benedict or the Master—one of its principal problems—it nevertheless did provide concrete provisions. Columbanus set out a complex liturgical program and stipulated what and when the monks were to eat and drink. Other practices, as is typical with medieval legislation, were outlined in those decrees stipulating the penalties for their contravention. Initially, these provisions may have been conveyed orally and through custom. As Columbanus was in the habit of dividing his time between the communal life of the monastery and the solitude of a hermitage, the codification of these practices would eventually have been necessary. Jonas noted that when the community at Luxeuil expanded, Columbanus sought out a place in which to found a new community. This became the monastery of Fontaine over which Columbanus placed “superiors” (*gubernatores*) and for which he established a rule: “In this monastery he placed priors as superiors whose religious integrity was in no doubt. After he had settled the community of monks in these places, he divided his time between them, and filled with the Holy Spirit he set down a Rule which they were to follow. The sensible reader or listener realizes in this the excellence of the holy man and the extent of his religious instruction.”¹⁸⁵ It is evident here that Jonas is referring to a written text, as is also the case with the

184. See, e.g., Angerer 1977; Diem 2011c; Rousseau and Diem forthcoming. See also Diem 2016a on Columbanian rules.

185. *Dedit gubernatores praepositos, de quorum religione nihil dubitabatur. His ergo in locis monachorum plebes constitutas, ipse vicissim omnibus intererat regulamque, quam tenerent, Spiritu sancto repletus condedit, in quam, qualis et quanta disciplinae vir sanctus fuerit, prudens lector vel auditor agnoscit.* VC 1.10: 170 (trans. O'Hara and Wood 2017, 117–118).

instances already mentioned of Brunhild and Theuderic's conflict with the saint and Agrestius's opposition to the Rule.

Columbanus was uncompromising and authoritarian as a monastic leader. He wrote his Rules to be followed, and they embodied the model of the monastic life he sought to impose on his communities. If, following Diem's approach, we read early monastic rules as models of psychology and discipline, Columbanus's Rules betray a preoccupation with control, sin, and punishment; they reflect a binary and harsh understanding of human nature and of human sinfulness, a "polar tension."¹⁸⁶ Columbanus's emphasis on sin, purity, and mortification, however, reflects a broader cultural shift that was taking place at this time, what Peter Brown has called the "peccatization" of the world, "with the definitive reduction of all experience, of history, politics, and the social order quite as much as the destiny of individual souls, to two universal explanatory principles, sin and repentance,"¹⁸⁷ and which marked a watershed in the history of Western Christianity. The Frankish elites's attraction to and investment in Columbanus's monasticism need to be understood in this context. The social function of monasteries and monks as privileged intercessors with God came to take on an increasingly important role—hence the minute attention given to purity—and they came to be seen as holy institutions in themselves.¹⁸⁸ In the years following Columbanus's death, what was at issue was not this model of intercession but rather the ways in which this monastic experiment was conducted and whether it needed to be so stringent. Rather than see the changes in the Columbanian movement in terms of rigid versus lax monasticism, we could interpret the changes in terms of competing theoretical models as the communities continued to negotiate their own identities and praxis. Nonetheless, unhesitating obedience, a rigorous asceticism, and a penitential regime lie at the core of Columbanus's monastic experiment. Columbanus would have looked askance at any attempt to alter or modify his pattern of monastic life. "Let those who are obedient become my heirs,"¹⁸⁹ he wrote to Athala while advising him to expel those monks who caused trouble in the community. He was to do this, however, "in peace and agreement with the rule."¹⁹⁰ There may be an echo of this conflict in Jonas's account of those monks who later left Luxeuil under Athala because "they could not bear his authority, excessive in its fervour, and that they were unable to endure the weight of the harsh discipline."¹⁹¹ Jonas here described

186. Gionta 2017, 92.

187. Brown 2000, 58.

188. Brown 2015, 195.

189. *Ep.* 4.4: 30.

190. *Ep.* 4.3: 28.

191. *VC* 2.1: 231.

Athala as the successor to Columbanus and the one who maintained the *tenor regulae* of his master.

Columbanus's monastic legislation reveals a tightly regulated and ritualized community in which thoughts, words, and deeds were subject to close scrutiny. The monastic way of life that Columbanus instituted for his communities was modeled on the stringent rigors of Irish monastic practice that in turn were inspired by the monks of Egypt. In both the *Regula coenobialis* and the *Penitential*, Columbanus followed the practices of his monastic teachers in Ireland. Elsewhere, in his letter to the Gallic bishops in which he defended his Irish customs, he wrote that he sought to maintain these practices, for "these are our weapons, shield and sword, these are our defence; these brought us from our native land; these here too we seek to maintain, though laxly; in these we pray and hope to continue up till death, as we have seen our predecessors do."¹⁹² Columbanus strove to continue in his continental communities the monastic practices of his native land, even if it was not possible to do so to the same extent.

There is no sense in Columbanus's Rules of the Stoic moderation and flexibility that would eventually ensure the success of the *RB* under the Carolingians and their successors. Although Columbanus appears to have known the *Regula Magistri* and perhaps also the *RB*, these texts appear to have had little influence on his conception of the monastic life.¹⁹³ In contrast to the anonymity of Benedict and his Rule for beginners,¹⁹⁴ Columbanus represented an elite form of monasticism for a new elite that drew heavily on the monastic philosophy of Cassian and the Egyptian cenobitic tradition. But this rigidity of practice and discipline appears to have led to conflict from very early on, as there was resistance within the communities to the type of monastic life Columbanus advocated. This dissent would eventually lead to a crisis in Columbanus's communities a decade after his death.

192. *Ep.* 2.6: 17–19.

193. Stancliffe 2011, 23.

194. See Leyser 2000 on the *RB*.

New Rules: The Agrestius Affair and the Regula Benedicti

COLUMBANUS WAS A CONTROVERSIAL FIGURE DURING HIS LIFETIME, and he remained so after his death. His letters show that he faced considerable opposition both from external authorities and from members of his own communities. Unhesitating obedience seems to have been a point of contention in the early communities, which could also be seen from the perspective of competing theoretical models for how the monastic life ought to be lived—not everyone agreed with the vision of the founder.¹

There were tensions latent within the Luxeuil community, as Columbanus's *Epistula* 4 makes clear, but his banishment along with the Insular monks in 610 further splintered the community. In banishing the Irish and British monks but allowing the native monks to remain in Luxeuil, Theuderic II effectively pursued an ethnic strategy in ridding his kingdom of these nonconformists. While Jonas makes clear that some of Columbanus's Frankish monks later joined him and continued on to Bobbio,² those monks who had been critical of Columbanus's leadership presumably remained behind in Luxeuil. Luxeuil became a predominantly Frankish community. The Insular contingent, the senior members of the community, and those Frankish monks who had been loyal to Columbanus were the ones who formed the new breakaway community at Bobbio.

A monastic rebellion took place in Luxeuil after Columbanus's departure, when Athala was prior and a group of monks revolted and left the community over the harshness of the monastic life there.³ This was presumably the reason for Athala's later leaving the community and joining Columbanus (as the abbot had advised him to do in *Ep.* 4). Jonas relates that some of the monks later repented and returned to the community, but others suffered various forms of punishment for their disobedience. Another rebellion broke out in the mid-620s, when one of the aristocratic monks, Agrestius, who had been in the service of King Theuderic II before he became a monk, challenged Columbanus's monastic practices and customs still current in Luxeuil. Through his uncle, who

1. Stevenson 1997, 207.

2. VC 1.27.

3. VC 2.1. This revolt clearly took place at Luxeuil during the time Athala was prior, not in Bobbio, as has been assumed (Dunn 2008). See O'Hara and Wood 2017, 179 n. 470.

was bishop of Geneva, Agrestius convened a synod of bishops in the Burgundian town of Mâcon in 626/627 to address these issues.⁴ At the synod, Agrestius branded Columbanus and his monastic practices as heretical. This was a direct attack on the memory and legacy of the saint. The aspects that Agrestius attacked appear to have concerned the different method for calculating the date of Easter favored by Columbanus, the Insular style of tonsure (a triangular cut on the crown of the head),⁵ and aspects of the liturgical and monastic customs that he deemed unorthodox. In response, the new abbot of Luxeuil, Eustasius, argued that these did not contravene Christian teaching. While the bishops did not condemn Columbanus or his practices as heretical, a compromise appears to have been reached.⁶ Luxeuil dropped the Easter dating favored by Columbanus and adopted that of Victorius of Aquitaine, the *computus* current in Gaul since 541 and the method of reckoning to which Columbanus had been so vehemently opposed. The severity of the monastic practices also appears to have been modified by combining them with elements from the more practical and moderate *RB*.⁷ Agrestius's attack on the legacy of Columbanus at Mâcon and the changes this brought about within the Luxeuil community made apparent just how contested Columbanus's legacy was. Even a decade after his death, he remained a controversial figure.

THE AGRESTIUS AFFAIR

Jonas wrote about the Agrestius affair in considerable detail. He dedicated two chapters in Book 2 to Agrestius's opposition and defeat. These are the longest chapters of the entire work, and the amount of space that Jonas gives to this crisis shows how important it was for him. Jonas cast Agrestius in the guise of Cain and Judas, the worst of traitors, "who cut to shreds the teachings of the master" (*qui magistri dicta scinderet*).⁸ The initial fervor of the monastic life had clearly gripped Agrestius, however, who sought permission from Abbot Eustasius to undertake missionary work. The abbot tried to dissuade Agrestius, as he was still inexperienced in the religious life. Agrestius disobeyed this advice and undertook a missionary journey to the Bavarians. After this mission failed, Agrestius went to Italy, where he became involved in the Aquileian Schism (the Three Chapters controversy) by siding with the group of northern Italian

4. VC 2.9. On the Agrestius affair, see Dumézil 2007; Fischer forthcoming; Fox 2014, 92–97.

5. See McCarthy 2003.

6. Stancliffe 2001, 212–213; Corning 2006, 51–53.

7. Stancliffe 2001, 211; Ó Cróinín 2005b.

8. VC 2.9: 246.

bishops in their opposition to the papacy.⁹ Jonas portrayed him as a schismatic, which is ironic, given that Columbanus shared similar views, as did many others in the Gallic Church at the time.¹⁰ Agrestius then attempted to persuade the abbots of Bobbio and Luxeuil to side with the Aquileian party in the schism. He sent a “poisonous letter” (*epistola venosa*) through Aureus, a notary in the service of the Lombard king, to Athala in Bobbio and returned to Luxeuil to try to persuade Eustasius personally.¹¹ When Eustasius failed to change the rebel monk’s mind, Agrestius was expelled from the community.¹² It was then that Agrestius turned against Columbanian practices and gained the backing of his kinsman, Bishop Abelenus of Geneva, who in turn rallied the support of other bishops. Even the king, Chlothar II, was asked to condemn Columbanus’s teaching (*adversus sanctam doctrinam*).¹³ Although this proved unsuccessful, the king gave permission for a synod to be convened. This was held in 626/627 on the outskirts of Mâcon, where an assembly of bishops met to consider the issue. Warnachar, the mayor of the palace and an enemy of Abbot Eustasius, appointed Bishop Treticus of Lyons to preside over the synod.¹⁴ It was biased in Agrestius’s favor and thus provides an interesting analogy with the 603 synod to which Columbanus was summoned but which he refused to attend.¹⁵ This time, however, the abbot of Luxeuil was present to defend both his own authority and the legitimacy of Columbanian practices.

Agrestius accused Columbanus’s doctrinal and institutional practices of being heretical. The Easter reckoning and the different style of tonsure worn by Irish monks and their communities, known as the Celtic tonsure, were the most obvious contentious issues. Jonas did not specifically mention the Easter controversy, although he did note Agrestius’s criticism of the Celtic tonsure.¹⁶ Agrestius’s general criticisms concerned a number of practices that he considered uncanonical.¹⁷ Agrestius furthermore attacked aspects of the Rule and what he saw as unnecessary liturgical rituals. He complained about the excessive ritual customs of the community, such as blessing spoons before eating, having to seek a blessing from another monk every time one entered or left a

9. VC 2.9: 247.

10. *Socius statim scismatis effectus, Romanae sedis a communionem seiunctus ac divisus est totius orbis communione*. VC 2.9: 247. Jonas also cited Matt. 16:18 as scriptural support for the supremacy of the Petrine office.

11. VC 2.9: 247–248.

12. VC 2.9: 248.

13. VC 2.9: 248.

14. VC 2.9: 249.

15. See *Ep.* 2.

16. VC 2.9: 251.

17. VC 2.9: 249.

building, and the addition of extra prayers during the Mass.¹⁸ As the mayor of the palace, Warnachar, died just before the synod—which was seen as divine punishment by Jonas—the synod may have been more lenient toward Eustasius than might otherwise have been the case.¹⁹ Although the abbot prevailed against the charges and the bishops reconciled both parties,²⁰ it is likely that this was only done once Luxeuil had conformed on the dating of Easter and the style of tonsure.²¹

Following Agrestius's failure to condemn Columbanian practices, he tried to undermine the monastic *familia* from within. He succeeded in gaining the support of Amatus and Romaric, the abbot and noble founder, respectively, of Remiremont, a double monastery situated near Luxeuil. Amatus and Romaric had been reprimanded by Eustasius "for neglecting certain things" (what exactly we are not told).²² They were, therefore, more likely, Jonas noted, "to propagate his madness in contempt of the Rule of the blessed Columbanus" (*in contemptu regulae beati Columbani propriam vesaniam propagare*).²³ Agrestius also tried to enlist the support of Burgundofara, the abbess of Eboriac/Faremoutiers, but was unsuccessful.²⁴ The series of calamities that struck Remiremont, in which rabid wolves killed two members of the community and then a lightning bolt killed more than fifty, served as ample proof that the community had backed the wrong side in the dispute.²⁵ Agrestius was then murdered by his slave (despite the fact that he had given the man his freedom) after he reputedly took sexual liberties with the man's wife. Jonas was reticent on the circumstances surrounding Agrestius's death, although he reported hearsay: "The cause of the crime was said to have been Agrestius's involvement with the man's wife. That anyway was what many said and wished to assert as the truth; we cannot confirm this however."²⁶ There may also have been political motives, as Agrestius

18. VC 2.9: 249–250.

19. VC 2.9: 249. See Fredegar 4.54, which notes Warnachar's death and provides the year as the forty-third year of Chlothar's reign (626). This allows the Synod of Mâcon to be dated to this year, as no written sources from the synod survive.

20. VC 2.9: 251.

21. See Krusch 1905, 38. Standcliffe 2001, 212–213, commented: "Given Jonas's readiness to pass over Columbanus's summons to the synod of Chalon without a word, his silence here certainly does not mean that the Easter question was not raised. Rather, Krusch must be right in arguing that the bishop would never have made peace with Luxeuil unless it had first conformed on Easter—and perhaps, we should add, on the tonsure too."

22. VC 2.10: 252.

23. VC 2.10: 252–253.

24. VC 2.10: 253.

25. VC 2.10.

26. *Occasio criminis dicebatur uxoris permixtio; quod quamvis multi dixerint et vera adserere velint, nostrum tamen firmare non est.* VC 2.10: 254.

was involved in aristocratic factions.²⁷ Following Agrestius's murder, Amatus and Romaric were reconciled with Eustasius.²⁸

Once the less acceptable features of Columbanus's monasticism, such as the Easter reckoning and the tonsure, had been dropped or modified, bishops and aristocratic families were more eager to promote it. This change is noted by Jonas when, immediately after describing the controversy and its reconciliation, he reports the support that was then given to Columbanian communities and the growth in new foundations. Even Abelenus, Agrestius's kinsman and bishop of Geneva, was now named as among those bishops who were backing the movement: "On their part Abelenus and the other Gallic bishops now aspired to support the customs [*instituta*] of Columbanus. For many had already for the love of Columbanus and his Rule established monasteries, uniting communities [*plebes*], and assembling flocks for Christ."²⁹ It was probably at this time, sometime in 628, that the more draconian aspects of Columbanian practice were modified by the introduction of the *RB*. As Agrestius continued his attempt to undermine the Columbanian *familia* after the Synod of Mâcon, it is unlikely that the Rule had been changed at this time. As Clare Stancliffe has convincingly argued, it was more likely to have been a year or so later, following Agrestius's death, when Amatus and Romaric settled their dispute with Eustasius, that the severity of Columbanus's monastic practices were also modified.³⁰

Felice Lifshitz has argued that the *Martyrology of Jerome*, an important liturgical list of saints' names and their feast days (including that of Columbanus), compiled in Luxeuil sometime after the Synod of Mâcon in 627/628, was the work of Agrestius or one of his faction. She sees Agrestius as a traditionalist defender of Columbanus's legacy and monasticism against the reforms that Abbot Eustasius tried to impose on the communities.³¹ She is clearly mistaken, however, as Agrestius attacked the legacy of Columbanus, and one of his points of contention was precisely the superfluous liturgical practices, such as the recitation of saints' names. Rather than attribute the compilation to Agrestius, the *Martyrology* must have developed in the aftermath of Mâcon as Eustasius sought to defend Columbanus's legacy while implementing a reform of the monastic practices and especially in relation to the dating of Easter. In this case, the *Martyrology* provides an important witness that Columbanus was remembered

27. See Fischer forthcoming.

28. VC 2.10: 255.

29. *Abelenus vero vel ceteri Galliarum episcopi post ad roboranda Columbanus instituta adspirant. Quam multi iam in amore Columbanus et eius regula monasteria construunt, plebes adunant, greges Christi congregant.* VC 2.10: 255.

30. Stancliffe 2001: 213.

31. Lifshitz 2006, 14–21, esp. 20.

(at least liturgically) at Luxeuil and that he was considered a saint. There is no additional evidence, however, that Luxeuil sought to promote his cult or legacy through the production of a work of hagiography. The manuscript transmission of the work as discussed by Lifshitz also shows that the *Martyrology* soon traveled from Luxeuil to northern Francia, where it was used in the area of Maastricht, the same zone where Jonas and Bishop Amandus were working, and they, indeed, may have used this text.³² Additional names of Columbanian figures working in this area were added to the list after their deaths, showing that there was a broader sense of communal identity among the Columbanian communities.³³ As Lifshitz has argued, the text may also have been geared toward the Neustrian court of Chlothar II, as many of the saints in the *Martyrology* were figures who resisted unjust authority, and the text sought to promote the notion that those in power should imitate the great kings of the past,³⁴ which also accords well with what we know of Eustasius's close ties to Chlothar's court and the context and aims of Jonas's hagiography.

The Agrestius affair, while damaging to the saintly reputation of Columbanus, also led to changes in the pattern of monastic life that he had established. A number of contemporary diplomatic sources attest to the incorporation of the *RB* into new Columbanian communities. The so-called *regula mixta*, a composite or "mixed rule" of Benedict and Columbanus, is first mentioned in the 632 foundation charter of Eligius for the community he founded at Solignac near Limoges.³⁵ Eligius, a courtier and goldsmith to King Dagobert I and not yet a bishop, forbade the property of the community to be alienated by bishops or other potentates or for such persons to have control over the monastery. He stipulated that the community was to follow in the manner of the "most holy men of Luxeuil" and to maintain the "Rule of the most blessed fathers Benedict and Columbanus" (*regula beatissimorum patrum Benedicti et Columbani*).³⁶ The community was directly answerable to the king, who had granted the land, and the abbot of Luxeuil was given permission to intervene if the rule was neglected. Solignac's first abbot, Remaclus, had been a monk at Luxeuil. The role of the community was clear: it was to pray for the king and for the remission of Eligius's sins.³⁷ The Rebais privilege of 637, which Dado obtained from Bishop Burgundofaro of Meaux, also mentions that the community was

32. Lifshitz 2006, 45.

33. Lifshitz 2006, 47.

34. Lifshitz 2006, 18–19.

35. *Charta Eligii* 2: 746–749. On the *regula mixta* and its significance, see Diem 2002, 77–89; 2011c; forthcoming; Prinz 1965, 263–292.

36. *Charta Eligii* 2: 747.

37. *Charta Eligii* 2: 748.

founded “under the Rule of Benedict and according to the manner of Luxeuil” (*sub regula Benedicti, et ad modum Luxoviense*).³⁸ As monks who misbehaved were to be disciplined *secundam regulam ipsius B. Benedicti vel B. Columbani*, it is clear that the *modus Luxoviensis* can be equated with the *Regula Columbani*.³⁹ In addition to the Rebais privilege, there are nine privileges, three saints’ Lives, a charter of monastic foundation, and a will that all mention the *regula mixta*.⁴⁰ The *Vita Sadalbergae*, for example, which was written in Laon around 680 probably by a nun, lauds the growth of monasticism during the abbacy of Waldebert of Luxeuil: “In his time, bands of monks and holy maidens began to spring up through all the provinces of Gaul. They thronged not only through the fields, farms and villages and castles, but even in the lonely wilderness. Monasteries began to blossom just from the rules of the blessed Benedict and Columbanus where only a few had appeared in the area before that time.”⁴¹ The rules for nuns composed by Donatus, who had been a monk at Luxeuil before becoming bishop of Besançon, and the *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines*, now ascribed to Jonas, show the extent to which the RB was adopted and used in conjunction with Columbanus’s normative texts to create new monastic legislation.⁴² It was through the Columbanian *familia* and by being combined with the *Regula Columbani* that the RB was first disseminated in western Europe.⁴³

MONASTIC REBELLION AND THE *REGULA BENEDICTI* IN BOBBIO

The RB provided a more comprehensive guideline and a better model for the monastic life less geared toward ascetic experts. But this development could also be seen as a decisive break with the monastic tradition of Columbanus. Columbanus was an autocratic abbot with a very definite idea of how the

38. *Diplomata* 275: 40. The most recent review of Dagobert’s immunity (the charter is actually a confirmation of an episcopal exemption with the addition of a royal immunity) is in Kölzer’s edition of the MGH *Diplomata*, where it is regarded as spurious. I wish to thank the anonymous reader for this note.

39. Diem 2002, 81.

40. Diem 2002, 78–79.

41. *Huius tempore per Galliarum provincias agmina monachorum et sacrarum puellarum examina non solum per agros, villas vicosque atque castella, verum etiam per heremi vastitatem ex regula dumtaxat beatorum patrum Benedicti et Columbani pullulare coeperunt, cum ante illud tempus monasteria vix paucis illis reperirentur in locis. Vita Sadalbergae* 8: 54. English translation by McNamara, Whatley, Halborg 1992, 183. On the *Vita Sadalbergae*, see Hummer 2003.

42. See *Regula Donati*. On this Rule, see Diem 2011c. On *Regula cuiusdam*, see Diem 2003, Diem 2007b. Diem is currently preparing a new edition and translation for Brepols of the *Regula cuiusdam*, which he ascribes to Jonas. It is also accessible in *PL* 87: 1053–1070.

43. On the possible channels through which the RB was introduced into these communities from Italy, see Charles-Edwards 2000, 385–388; Ó Cróinín 2005b, 22–23.

monastic life was to be lived. His monasticism was modeled on Irish monastic practices, and, as such, it was meant to be demanding, punitive, and severe. He would have looked askance at any attempt to modify the punitive nature of his monasticism, which was in essence what the introduction of the *RB* entailed. Those instances of monastic dissent noted by Jonas all concerned the harshness and pedantic nature of Columbanian practices; he never implied that it was an incomplete work of monastic legislation. It is noteworthy that Jonas does not mention Benedict in the *VC*, and despite the fact that he used the *RB* in his *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines*, he changed many of its precepts, which has led its current editor to question whether Jonas was reacting to many of the core principles of the *RB*.⁴⁴

Did the community of Bobbio also adopt the *regula mixta* around the time that Jonas wrote the *VC* in the late 630s and early 640s? The 643 privilege of Pope Theodore I for the Bobbio community, in which the monastery's special status—it was exempt from the jurisdiction of the local bishop and directly under the protection of the papacy—was reconfirmed, provides the best evidence for the use of the *RB* in Bobbio. The pope, at the request of the Lombard king and queen, Rothari and Gundiberga (the timing is noteworthy, given that it coincides with the Lombard conquest of Liguria and the promulgation of Rothari's Edict), granted the privilege to Abbot Bobolenus and his community of one hundred and fifty monks who followed the Rule of Benedict and Columbanus.⁴⁵ This referred not to two separate pieces of legislation but clearly to a single rule (*uno regule spiritu superna inspiratione conmotus*).⁴⁶ In content and aims, the privilege was similar to the Frankish episcopal exemptions in that it restricted episcopal influence on the community. Bishops were not to interfere in the affairs of the monastery, and if invited by the community to celebrate Mass or to perform consecrations, they were to leave as soon as they had performed their duties and were not to demand any payment.⁴⁷ If both the abbot and the community became lax in monastic discipline, the pope alone had the right to intervene.⁴⁸ The 628 privilege of Pope Honorius I, whereby Bobbio was first brought under the protection of the Holy See,⁴⁹ was also mentioned in order to underline further concessions.⁵⁰

44. I owe these observations to discussions with Albrecht Diem. See Diem 2007b; Diem forthcoming. I am grateful to Diem for sharing this work prior to publication.

45. *CDB* 13: 109.

46. *CDB* 13: 109.

47. *CDB* 13: 110.

48. *CDB* 13: 111.

49. *CDB* 10: 102–103. Jonas detailed Abbot Bertulf's efforts in acquiring the privilege from Rome, efforts in which he was personally involved: *VC* 2.23: 281–283.

50. *CDB* 13: 109.

The authenticity of the privilege has been questioned.⁵¹ It is, however, difficult to establish precisely.⁵² The possibility that the privilege is a forgery revolves around a number of unusual concessions and the manner in which the privilege was preserved. A major reservation concerns the anachronism that conceded to the abbot of Bobbio the right to wear the miter, to bless the lay congregation during the liturgy, and to use other episcopal regalia.⁵³ Mitered abbots were a feature not of the seventh century but of the eleventh century and later. This may indicate a forgery or that later additions were made to the original privilege. As for how the document was preserved, the original privilege does not survive, only a transcription made by the notary Leo de Turre in 1172 during a period of conflict between the abbot and bishop of Bobbio.⁵⁴ It thus shares common characteristics with other forged charters. Leo, however, added to his copy of the charter a detailed account of the manner in which the document was authenticated. The papal legate to the region, together with the bishop of Piacenza, inspected the privilege and pronounced it to be genuine.⁵⁵ Then, in the presence of a number of named witnesses, Leo was instructed to transcribe a copy for the Bobbio community.⁵⁶ The editor of the charter, Carlo Cipolla, in weighing up the evidence for and against the privilege's authenticity, considered the mention of the term *carta*, which he understood as meaning "papyrus,"⁵⁷ and to the leaden bull used by the papal chancery as evidence in favor of an original document. He further noted that the privilege referred to the original dedication of Bobbio to Saint Peter and not to Saint Columbanus, as well as the detail that Columbanus was not termed *sanctus* but simply *vir venerabilis*, as further evidence for its authenticity.⁵⁸ Cipolla's conclusion was that the privilege, although not entirely original, cannot be completely dismissed as a forgery.⁵⁹ According to the evidence of this privilege, therefore, the *regula mixta* had been adopted in Bobbio by May 643.

51. Bullough 1997, 27. See also Anton 1975, 58–59. Bullough's statement that "Neither the plausibly authentic bull of 628 nor the probably false bull of 643 links Columbanus with Bobbio's original dedication to St. Peter in its address clause" is incorrect. The dedication to Saint Peter is mentioned in the 643 bull. Ó Cróinín 2005b, 22 n. 48, noted that the authenticity of the bull has been "thoroughly vindicated by Ewig." See Ewig 1974.

52. See the comments of Carlo Cipolla in his edition of the Bobbio charters, CDB: 105–108.

53. CDB: 109.

54. See Tosi 1981, 16.

55. *dixit ipsum esse sine ulla reprehensione carte, stilli, bulle vel littere . . . con vera bulla plumbea pendente.* CDB 13: 112.

56. CDB 13: 112.

57. CDB 13: 106.

58. CDB 13: 105.

59. CDB 13: 108.

Italian scholar Michele Tosi suggested that Bobolenus, the fourth abbot of Bobbio and the recipient of the papal privilege, was responsible for a project of reform at Bobbio. He argued that the papal privilege could be seen as the official approval of this reform.⁶⁰ According to Tosi, there was a crisis concerning the Columbanian Rule at Bobbio under Athala that was not fully resolved until Bobolenus introduced the *regula mixta*.⁶¹ The basis for this assumption rests on Jonas's account of rebel monks who left the community under Athala's Rule.⁶² However, Jonas was referring to a monastic rebellion that took place at Luxeuil, not Bobbio, and his account has been misread by Tosi and others. The dispute concerned some monks (of Luxeuil) who wished to leave the community to become hermits and who objected to the harsh monastic way of life.⁶³

Tosi and other scholars have stressed the importance of this conflict while arguing that it may have prompted a monastic reform at Bobbio.⁶⁴ Tosi also suggested that Athala's successor at Bobbio, Bertulf, was unable to address the problem of the rule because he faced the more pressing threat of episcopal interference from the local bishop, Probus of Tortona.⁶⁵ Instead, Bertulf may have appointed Bobolenus to investigate how the Rule might be revised and how best to resolve its problems.⁶⁶ There is no evidence for this whatsoever. A source, however, that Tosi saw as indicating that Bobolenus implemented a program of monastic reform was the encomium written in memory of the abbot at Bobbio.

The commemorative hymn, the *Versus de Bobuleno abbate*,⁶⁷ was written by an unknown monk of Bobbio sometime after Bobolenus's death in 654. It is notable for its use of Hiberno-Latin versification and for showing the influence of Jonas in the many motifs and phrases found in the VC.⁶⁸ The hymn survives in two tenth-century luxury manuscripts (both of which contain the VC) produced at Bobbio.⁶⁹ It reveals few biographical details about Bobolenus,

60. Tosi 1981, 18.

61. Tosi 1981, 8–12.

62. VC 2.1: 231–232.

63. VC 2.1: 231.

64. Tosi 1981, 11–12. See also Erhart 2006, 380–381; Dunn 2000, 181; 2008; Richter 2008, 56.

65. Tosi 1981: 12.

66. Tosi 1981, 12–13.

67. The hymn has been published as an appendix to Krusch's 1902 earlier edition of the VC. See *Versus de Bobuleno*. Norberg 1979 provided a detailed critical analysis and a new edition of the hymn. Norberg 1958, 498–500, also discussed the hymn in the context of the development of literary Latin in Italy from the end of the sixth century to the end of the eighth century. In this case, it is seen as a product of the Hiberno-Latin influences that were introduced into Italy by Irish monks. All citations here are taken from Krusch's 1902 edition.

68. The various instances are given in Norberg 1958, 498–499 n. 28.

69. Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale, F. IV. 26, fols. 70v–72r; Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale, F. IV. 12, fols. 101v–103r.

focusing instead on Bobolenus's qualities as abbot. In this respect, however, it is important for the manner in which it portrays Bobolenus and his relations with his community.

Bobolenus was the abbot of Bobbio when Jonas completed the VC. He succeeded Bertulf, the abbot who commissioned Jonas to write the *Life*, in 642. He was, along with Waldebert, the abbot of Luxeuil, one of the dedicatees of the VC. He was the son of Winioc, a priest in Burgundy who had been an acquaintance of Columbanus. Winioc appears in two miracle accounts in the VC.⁷⁰ Apart from addressing the abbot in the letter of dedication and noting his relationship to Winioc, Jonas revealed nothing more about Bobolenus. The abbot had presumably been a monk at Luxeuil before joining the Bobbio community. The encomiast opens his hymn by noting Bobolenus's noble origins: *Atticorum ex genere oriundus nobilis*. No mention is made of his father, Winioc, which is surprising, as he appears a number of times in the VC, a source the encomiast knew. This is interesting, as Jonas made no mention of Bobolenus's noble origins, only that his father was a priest. The ethnic term *Atticus* has also caused some confusion. The editor of the VC, Krusch, considered it to mean that Bobolenus was of East Roman or Greek origin,⁷¹ but Eugen Ewig has more plausibly identified it as referring to the Frankish tribe, the *Chattuarii* or *Attoarii*. This tribe settled in the area around Langres where Winioc was a priest.⁷²

The portrait of Bobolenus presented by the encomiast is of a man who has successfully preserved and fulfilled (*patravit*) the teachings of "the fathers."⁷³ He is held up as a worthy heir to Columbanus, one who, having been taught by the saint, faithfully followed his teaching: *Edoctus a sancto Dei Columbano praesule, cui post quarto in loco meruit succedere, ipsius doctrinam sequens rectum tenet tramite*.⁷⁴ He is moreover lauded as the "preserver of the rule" (*regula conservator*).⁷⁵ His pastoral qualities are praised; he was strict with the disobedient, while he protected the community from the devil by expelling dissenters.⁷⁶ The most interesting feature of this hymn, however, is the egalitarian portrayal of Bobolenus as an abbot who took part in manual labor alongside his monks. This is especially so in the context of the aristocratic depictions of some Columbanian abbots in Frankish hagiography from the same period.⁷⁷ The

70. VC 1.15: 177–178; 1.17: 182–183.

71. *Versus de Bobuleno* 4: 153.

72. Ewig 1976, 235 n. 17.

73. *Versus de Bobuleno* 4: 154.

74. *Versus de Bobuleno* 5: 154.

75. *Versus de Bobuleno* 19: 155.

76. *Versus de Bobuleno* 19, 20: 155.

77. On the increasing emphasis on the noble origins of saints in hagiographic works from this period in comparison with earlier works, see Keller 1977.

encomiast emphasizes that the abbot joined his monks in manual labor and took his food in common with them, thus stressing his humility.⁷⁸ This sense of concord was similarly a feature of Jonas's portrayal of the early Columbanian community in Gaul.⁷⁹

The hymn is a complex encomium and indicates that the community regarded Bobolenus as a saint following his death, but it reveals little about a change in monastic practices at Bobbio. The encomiast underlines that Bobolenus was taught by Columbanus and followed his teachings, while he is lauded as the *regula conservator*. Bobolenus even performed a miracle similar to the one Columbanus worked on his father when he healed Winio's wounded forehead.⁸⁰ The encomiast stresses Bobolenus's doctrinal continuity with Columbanus's teachings. The poem could be interpreted in the light of a conservative stance concerning the change in Columbanian monastic practices. Verse 20, in which the author refers to a "snake lurking in the bushes," could be a reference to monastic dissent, but the abbot expelled those monks and is portrayed as healing the ulcer so that no wound appeared.⁸¹

On the evidence of the 643 papal privilege, however, it is more likely that Bobolenus was the abbot who introduced the *regula mixta* to Bobbio. The way he is praised as preserving Columbanus's teachings could then be read in the sense that he preserved the essence of Columbanus's monastic practices following a period in which these had been contested. The allusion to the devil, the leitmotif of monastic dissent, may suggest that a similar reaction to that which had taken place in the Frankish communities also occurred at Bobbio. That Bobolenus resolved these issues by accommodating Columbanian monastic practices with those of Benedict seems in this case the more likely meaning behind the phrase *regula conservator*.⁸²

BOBBIO AND THE *REGULA MAGISTRI*

Although the *Versus de Bobuleno* is a problematic source in that it is open to conflicting interpretations concerning a monastic reform at Bobbio, it is of considerable interest for its portrayal of Bobolenus and his role as abbot. But it ultimately reveals little about the introduction of the *RB* to Bobbio. However,

78. *Versus de Bobuleno* 6, 8: 154; 12: 155.

79. VC 1.5: 161.

80. *Versus de Bobuleno* 21: 155.

81. *mox sanavit ipse ulcus, cicatrix nec paruit. Versus de Bobuleno* 21: 155.

82. See Tosi 1981, 15: "la soluzione più logica sarebbe quella di una rielaborazione della primitiva regola di Bobbio, che ne conservasse lo spirito e ne addolcisse le prescrizioni. In ogni caso, era necessario un testo scritto che avesse ricevuto la necessaria approvazione da parte dell'autorità competente."

based on the premise that there was a dispute in the community over the rule that was resolved by Bobolenus, Michele Tosi and Marilyn Dunn have argued that Bobolenus's reformed rule or *regula mixta* is a text known as the *Regula Magistri* (*Rule of the Master*), a hybrid work that drew on the Rules of Benedict and Columbanus. This is a controversial and problematic hypothesis, which, as we shall see, cannot be substantiated.

The *Regula Magistri* was traditionally thought to have been composed after the *RB*, but in 1937, Benedictine scholar Augustin Genestout claimed that the *RB* in fact relied on that of the Master. In so doing, he initiated "one of the greatest surprises in the history of medieval scholarship."⁸³ Genestout's thesis gained widespread acceptance, and in the 1960s, another Benedictine scholar, Adalbert de Vogüé, published a three-volume critical edition of the *Regula Magistri* in which he argued that the work was composed in the 520s south of Rome in Campania.⁸⁴ Dunn reopened the debate in the 1990s and, following Tosi, has forcefully argued for a Bobbio provenance for the rule.⁸⁵ She has advanced a number of liturgical, ritual, linguistic, and institutional features as evidence for a later date and place of composition. These features raise questions that it is not possible to explore at length here. I instead focus on some of the problems presented by the *Regula Magistri* and whether it displays shared features that might be suggestive of the Columbanian *regula mixta*.

The *Regula Magistri* is arguably the most unusual monastic rule from the Early Middle Ages. It is also, at four times longer than the *RB*, a remarkably detailed work of monastic legislation. Its ninety-five chapters cover a range of topics, which, beyond the standard subjects, include such matters as courtesy toward angels and what was suitable monastic underwear.⁸⁶ The Rule portrays a small, highly ritualized, and rural community, a place that was a center of craft and book production. Two deans were appointed to supervise ten monks each, and they were to keep a close eye on their wards at all times.⁸⁷ But it was not a community cut off from the outside world. Monks went on journeys, and guests were received at the monastery. Indeed, it would seem that some guests took advantage of monastic hospitality. The Master was particularly scathing about wandering monks and priests who availed themselves of food and lodging without participating in the manual labor of the monks.

83. Southern 1979, 221. See also Knowles 1963, 135–195.

84. See *Regula Magistri*. All citations here are from the English translation.

85. On the debate, see Dunn 1990; de Vogüé 1992; Dunn 1992; 2000, 182–184.

86. See, e.g., *Regula Magistri* 47: 207; 81: 245.

87. See *Regula Magistri* 11: 141–148.

In terms of ritual, the *Regula Magistri* shares some features with Columbanus's legislation. As in Columbanus's *Regula monachorum*, the *Regula Magistri* follows an increasing and decreasing system of liturgy for the night office based on the seasons, whereas the night office in the *RB* is fixed. And, as in the Columbanian communities, monks were required to follow rituals of blessing: "so it may be seen that they are observing the rule about requesting prayer when they enter the outside threshold of the monastery's exterior portal."⁸⁸ They were also to collect the crumbs after meals, which, at the end of the week, were blessed and cooked, a practice that also appears in Columbanus's *Regula coenobialis*.⁸⁹ Based on these and other features, Dunn argued that the Rule was composed at Bobbio in the second half of the seventh century. Her main arguments center on computistical and linguistic evidence. She termed as "definitive proof of Irish influence" the fact that the Master used the same spring and autumn equinoxes, March 25 and September 24, used by Columbanus and the Irish in their reckoning for the date of Easter.⁹⁰ These, she argues, were already antiquated computistical systems on the Continent in the early sixth century, when the Alexandrian date of March 21 was adopted for the spring equinox. She furthermore sees some of the terminology used by the Master as indicative that the Rule was written in Lombard Italy.⁹¹ The Master uses a number of technical legal terms found in the Lombard laws of the seventh century: *rogus*, a "petition," used by both the Master and Jonas in the sense *rogus Dei*, meaning an intercessory prayer; *saltuarius*, an official subject to a Lombard judge; and *maiordomus*, or mayor of the palace, a royal official appointed by Merovingian and Lombard kings.⁹² She also argued that the use of the term *secundarius* reflects Insular influence.⁹³ There was no office of prior, but the *secundarius* was the man appointed as the designated successor when the abbot was dying. It was the abbot himself who chose his successor, not the community.⁹⁴ This would also seem to have been the case in the Columbanian communities. Such a practice parallels Insular royal custom whereby a successor was chosen by a ruler while he was still alive. In the ninth-century *Vita Aelfredi regis*, the term *secundarius* was used by Asser to denote that Alfred was the heir apparent during the kingship of his brother, Ethelred. This may be the Latin rendering of the vernacular royal

88. *Regula Magistri* 67: 232–233; see Columbanus's *RCoen.* 3: 146; VC 2.9: 249–250.

89. *RCoen.* 2: 146.

90. Dunn 1990, 583.

91. See Dunn 1999, 249–254.

92. Dunn 1999, 251.

93. Dunn 1999, 251–252.

94. *Regula Magistri* 92, 93: 272–281.

terms *aetheling* in English and *tánaise ríg* in Irish.⁹⁵ The Master, therefore, had an autocratic and monarchical concept of the abbatial office similar to that of Columbanus.⁹⁶

The debate was reopened by Dunn, who presented compelling evidence for the later date and place of composition of this enigmatic text. The matter is not made any easier by the two earliest manuscripts which fail to provide a terminus ante quem.⁹⁷ Different scholars have given the manuscripts various dates from both the sixth and the seventh centuries.⁹⁸ François Masai argued for a sixth-century date, which would obviously exclude the possibility that the Rule was written at Bobbio, but Tosi has argued for a later seventh-century date.⁹⁹ These are only some of the complicated issues surrounding the *Regula Magistri*, and they deserve fuller treatment. It has only been possible to sketch some of these problems in dealing with the specific question of whether the *Regula Magistri* arose out of an amalgamation of the Rules of Benedict and Columbanus under the aegis of the abbot of Bobbio. But there are difficulties with locating the Rule in a Columbanian milieu, as de Vogüé argued.¹⁰⁰ Stancliffe has also convincingly shown Columbanus's dependency on the *Regula Magistri* and that he drew on that rather than the *RB*.¹⁰¹ This may account for some of the shared features in both rules and in this case excludes the possibility that the *Regula Magistri* is a seventh-century Bobbio text.

The *Regula Magistri* is also much more moderate in its penal code and more liberal in its provisions of food and drink than was the case in Columbanus's monasteries. It betrays very little of the severity of Columbanus's Rules and penitential practices. Particularly in the Master's conception of penance, de Vogüé's thesis for an early date is justified. In a detailed chapter on how a monk who has been excommunicated should do penance, the Master notes what the abbot should say to the penitent when he has been reconciled: "See to it, brother, see to it that henceforth you sin no more so as to be obliged to do penance for this vice a second time, for the obligation to do penance a second time would cut

95. Dunn 1999, 252–253.

96. If the abbot recovered after his *secundarius* was appointed and consecrated by a bishop, then he was termed a *Caesar designatus*. *Regula Magistri* 93: 278–280. Jonas used the term *monarchiae* in relation to the office of abbot (VC 2.10: 252). On this magisterial terminology, see de Vogüé 1988a, 94.

97. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 12634 (*CLA* 5: 646); Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale lat. 12205 (*CLA* 5: 633).

98. On the dating and the different views proposed by scholars, see appendix 2 in Dunn 1990, 591–592.

99. Masai et al. 1953; Tosi 1981, 27–40.

100. De Vogüé 1992.

101. See Stancliffe 2011, 23–26.

you off into heresy.”¹⁰² This concept of one-off penance indicates an early date, as it does not show the influence of the system of repeatable penance introduced by Columbanus. This is a strong indication of a pre-Columbanian date.

Tosi’s assertion that the *Versus de Bobuleno* should be read in the light of a reform undertaken by Bobolenus at Bobbio and that the *Regula Magistri* was the product of this reform is likewise at odds with the Master’s portrayal of the abbot in the rule. What is notable about the *Versus* is the egalitarian depiction of Bobolenus, one example of which is the author’s assertion that the abbot ate in common with his monks. This is not the case in the *Regula Magistri*, where the abbot was to have his own “high table” at which senior members of the community, visiting outsiders, and, “taking turns as the abbot wishes, those who know the psalter” were permitted to share their meal with the abbot.¹⁰³ The presence of guests in the refectory is also at odds with what we know of Columbanus’s monasteries. It was inconceivable for lay guests to eat in common with the monks in the refectory, as Jonas outlined in his account of how Columbanus reacted when King Theuderic II stepped into the refectory at Luxeuil.¹⁰⁴ Such aspects, however small, raise doubts concerning the Rule’s composition at Bobbio. The *Regula Magistri*, while bearing some similarities to Columbanian practices, cannot be seen as evidence for the introduction of the *RB* to Bobbio. It is only the 643 papal privilege—itself by no means devoid of textual difficulties—that provides evidence for Bobbio’s monastic reform and adoption of the *regula mixta*.

JONAS AND MONASTIC REFORM

The issue of the *regula mixta* and the monastic reform of the Columbanian *familia* is important because Jonas mentions nothing about it. Jonas remains silent on the introduction of the *regula mixta*, even though he records the foundation of monasteries, such as Solignac and Rebais, where the *RB* was combined with Columbanus’s Rules. These were simply founded, he notes, *ex regula Columbani*.¹⁰⁵ There is likewise no evidence of the *RB* in the *VC* nor, indeed, any mention of Benedict, even though Jonas knew and extensively drew from Gregory the Great’s *Dialogues*. Like the problems over the Easter reckoning and the Insular tonsure, which were contentious issues before and during the

102. *Regula Magistri* 14: 157.

103. *Regula Magistri* 84: 250.

104. *VC* 1.19: 190–191.

105. *VC* 2.10: 255–256.

Agrestius affair, Jonas is silent about changes in Columbanian monastic practice. This is all the more puzzling because he used the *RB* in combination with Columbanus's Rules in writing his *Regula ad virgines*.

There is no doubt that Jonas gives a false impression of seamless continuity between the monasticism of his own day and that of the founder abbot. The sacredness of Columbanus's Rule was, however, strongly emphasized by Jonas in his account of its composition. The saint composed a Rule that was full of the Holy Spirit, a Rule that was to be preserved by his monastic "peoples" (*plebes*): "filled with the Holy Spirit he set down a Rule which they were to follow. The sensible reader or listener realizes in this the excellence of the holy man and the extent of his religious instruction."¹⁰⁶ In referring to Bertulf, the abbot of Bobbio who commissioned Jonas but who received his monastic training at Luxeuil, Jonas notes that when Bertulf entered Luxeuil, the community was still following the holy rule (*quo diu subiectus sanctae regulae*).¹⁰⁷ This could be read in the sense that by the time Jonas was writing, he no longer considered that Luxeuil followed such a rule.

Jonas's silence on the *regula mixta* may reflect an unwillingness to acknowledge these monastic reforms. The letter of dedication to the abbots of Bobbio and Luxeuil that prefaces the *VC* may also provide a clue to Jonas's views on this matter. In referring to Bobolenus and Waldebert, Jonas comments that they, the successors of Athala and Eustasius as abbots of Bobbio and Luxeuil, ought to preserve the *instituta* of Columbanus. "I also learnt things from the venerable men, Athala and Eustasius, who were his successors at Bobbio and Luxeuil respectively, monasteries of which you now are the heads, and they, as masters, passed on to their communities those teachings which deserved to be kept."¹⁰⁸ The use of the gerund *servanda* implies that something should or ought to be preserved. The message is subtle but clear: the *instituta* of Columbanus have been neglected by the abbots, and they should take heed to preserve them. Jonas may well have had concerns about how his work of hagiography would be received. He

106. *intererat regulamque, quam tenerent, Spiritu sancto repletus condedit, in quam, qualis et quantae disciplinae vir sanctus fuerit, prudens lector vel auditor agnoscit.* *VC* 1.10: 170 (O'Hara and Wood 2017, 117–118). This echoes Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* 2.36: 107, where, in referring to the Rule written by Benedict, he mentions that the reader will get an impression of what kind of man the saint was by reading it.

107. *VC* 2.23: 281.

108. *vel quae etiam nos per venerabiles viros Athalam et Eustasium didicimus: quorum primus Ebobiensis, secundus Luxoviensis coenobii, quo vos praesules existitis, eius successores fuerunt, qui magistri instituta suis plebibus servanda tradiderunt.* *VC, Epistula ad Waldebertum et Bobolenum*: 145.

includes an unusual passage in which, among the standard self-deprecatory remarks about style, he notes that those who first praised the work might take a different view upon reading it:

The elegance of the work I have undertaken will fall to your [the abbots'] discretion, so that if some things, less clear than they should be, lack the refinement of sophistication, they may be embellished by your literary graces and become appropriate to my readers. And while some of them may be horrified at my lack of literary skill, since deeds are not matched by word, let them not fail, in distaste, to imitate the virtues of the saints, and while rejoicing at the work's birth, stretch out their hand, but soon (bloodied by the harshness of brambles) strive to withdraw it. It must be said to these people that swimmers, who are thrown back on to the river bank, drained of their strength by the discharge of swirling eddies, are accustomed (when other help is lacking) to grasp briars with quick exertion.¹⁰⁹

If it was generally known in 642 that the current abbots of Luxeuil and Bobbio, Waldebert and Bobolenus, had made significant changes to Columbanus's *instituta*, which had been preserved by Athala and Eustasius (the *magistri*), the implication is that Jonas was in some way critical of these changes. Another way of reading the passage might be that Athala and Eustasius handed on those *instituta* that deserved to be preserved, and not others. Given the context of the passage, however, and the vivid images Jonas employs here—of those who withdraw their hands stained with blood from the hardship of the path and of exhausted swimmers thrown up on the bank—a critical reading seems more likely.

The dissent over the Rule and the monastic reforms at Bobbio under Bobolenus may also provide the context for Jonas's decision to leave the community in the late 630s to pursue pastoral work in the far northeast of the Frankish kingdom with Bishop Amandus. Although in one sense Jonas can be seen as the chronicler of the Columbanian monastic network and an important figure in his own right, he was also in many respects an outsider. He was not a Frank, a

109. *Erit tamen commissi operis, venerandi patris, vestri arbitrii cultus, ut si aliqua minus rite prompta decorem faciditatis caruerint, vestris faleramentis decorentur, ut legentibus apta fiant: ne dum meam imperitiam in eloquio exhorrent, cum facta dictis non exsequeuntur, sanctorum virtutes fastidiose ferendo non imitentur, et cum ad partum opus ovantes manum tetenderint, mox sentium asperitate cruentam nitantur subtrahere. Quibus dicendum est, nantes solere, reuma gurgitum fractis viribus, ripe redditos, cum alia defuerint subsidia, festino conamine sentes adprehendere.* VC, *Epistula ad Waldebertum et Bobolenum*: 146 (O'Hara and Wood 2017, 87).

monk of Luxeuil, or a member of the Neustrian elite who were the driving forces behind the expansion of the Columbanian foundations. The *VC* can best be understood as a crisis text written in the aftermath of a period of deep division and conflict within the Columbanian communities.¹¹⁰ Jonas had become an abbot by the time he came to write the *VC*, so this may have given him more autonomy and leeway to express a dissenting view.

110. On Rules as crisis texts, see Diem forthcoming, 2016a, 2011b.

An Italian Monk in Merovingian Gaul

JONAS OF BOBBIO, WHO WROTE AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CLASSICAL canon of biography, became himself a classic author in his genre.¹ Jonas's hagiography has been the subject of scholarly inquiry since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.² Historians have studied the VC for biographical details on Columbanus and for the political and monastic history of the Frankish and Lombard kingdoms, while Jonas's idiosyncratic and complex Latin has attracted the dissecting eye of Latin philologists. But in addition to his literary achievement, Jonas is of historical interest as an individual in his own right because his writings allow us to frame him in a biographical profile. Although he was sensitive about literary pride, this fortunately did not preclude him from occasionally writing about himself. In his letter of dedication addressed to the abbots of Luxeuil and Bobbio, for example, he wrote vividly about his experience as a missionary in Flanders.³ Such personal insights give us a unique window into the life of a seventh-century monk. The affairs of his monastery took him to Rome, while his missionary work brought him near the shores of the English Channel (see map 3). As a companion of Bishop Amandus, the leading missionary figure of the seventh century, he was at the forefront of the missionary impulse of the time, while his activities as a hagiographer and later as an abbot brought him into contact with a wide network of ecclesiastical and political figures. This chapter considers Jonas not only as one of the most important hagiographers of the seventh century, but also as an individual and historical figure in his own right.

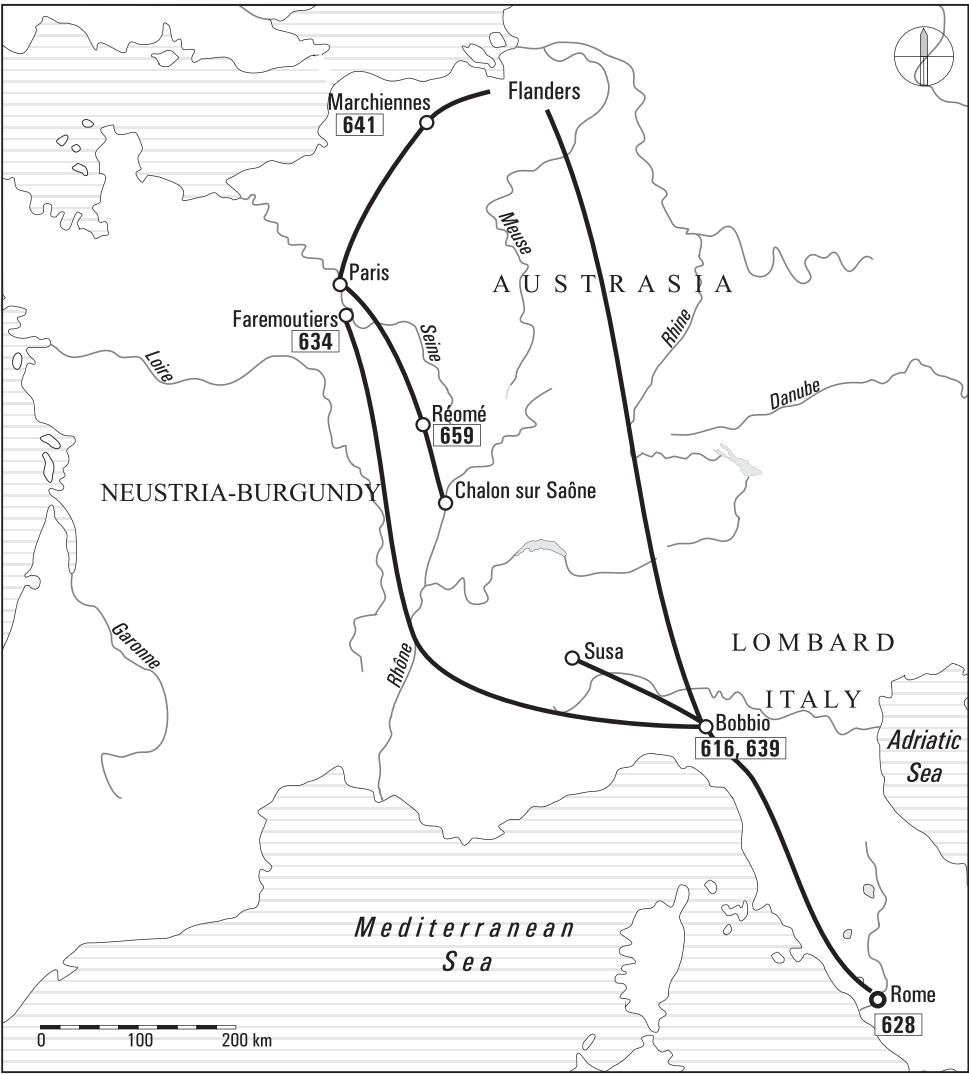
URBS NOBILIS: SUSAN AND THE ALPS

Jonas was born probably toward the end of the sixth or around the turn of the seventh century in the Alpine town of Susa. The ancient Roman town, situated

1. Berschin 1988a, 41: "Jonas, der den repräsentativen Klassikerkanon der Biographie im VII. Jahrhundert schrieb, ist selbst bald ein Klassiker in seinem Genre geworden. Seine Wirkung ist groß. . . . Als einziger im VII. Jahrhundert hat er ein mehrere Viten umfassendes Œuvre aufzuweisen." De Vogüé 1988b, 34, has seen Jonas as a towering figure among seventh-century writers: "Dans le désert du VII^e siècle, où ne poussent que des arbres nains, il fait figure de géant."

2. Renaissance scholar Laurentius Surius published the first edition of Jonas's *Vita Columbani* in 1575. He was followed by Irish Franciscan scholars Thomas Messingham and Patrick Fleming in 1624 and 1667, respectively, by Benedictine scholar Jean Mabillon in 1669, and by the Bollandists. See Krusch 1905, 142–143, for a list of the various editions.

3. VC, *Epistula ad Waldebertum et Bobolenum*: 145–146.



Map 3. Jonas's travels.

on the banks of the Dora Riparia and nestled at the foot of the Alpine pass of Susa, was one of the main gateways into Italy. It was a key nodal point because Susa was the Alpine pass that was open the longest when all the others were impassable with snow. By the time Jonas was born there, Susa was part of the Frankish kingdom of Burgundy.⁴ Although it was located south of the Alps in Italy and had, from its foundation, been part of the Mediterranean world of the Romans, by the time Jonas was born, its horizons had shifted to the ascendant barbarian kingdoms beyond the Alps.

Jonas grew up with the remnants of the Classical past all around him. The public monuments erected by the Romans in so many towns throughout the empire dotted the civic landscape.⁵ A triumphal arch erected in honor of Augustus stood over the main road leading to Gaul on the edge of the town. It was built by the local Celtic leader, Cotius, in around 9 B.C. to celebrate an alliance with the Romans. The ornate frieze above the arch depicted the sacrifice of animals that sealed the pact between the Romans and the local chieftain. Just beyond it stood the Roman fort and an aqueduct that provided water for the town's baths, the Gratian *thermae*, which had been restored in the late fourth century. There was also a small amphitheater built toward the end of the second century on the southern outskirts of the town, but this had been abandoned by Jonas's day. The administrative, commercial, and cultic center of the town was the old Roman forum. This was located in front of the present eleventh-century cathedral of San Giusto and the still imposing third-century Roman gate, the Porta Savoia. A large pagan temple surrounded on three sides by a portico had stood here until a Christian basilica dedicated to the martyr Justus, killed during the Diocletian persecutions, was built on the site toward the end of the fourth century.⁶ It was likely here that Jonas received his first religious formation and education.⁷

Surrounded as he was by the ruins of Roman civilization, Jonas developed a keen sense of the Classical past and an acute historical awareness. He noted,

4. The eleventh-century monk Rodolfus Glaber praised Susa as "the oldest of Alpine towns." Glaber 1989, 4.7: 182. For the history of the Susa region in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, see Gallina, Sergi, Casiraghi, and Cantino Wataghin 1997; Sergi 2005.

5. On Susa's Roman past, see the collected volume of essays in *Romanità valsusina* 2004.

6. We know almost nothing about the religious and monastic life in the Susa valley prior to the foundation of the Benedictine abbey of Novalesa in 726. Excavations in 2005–2006 confirmed that the ancient Roman forum was situated in the area of the square in front of the cathedral. The structure of a Roman temple was also discovered. I am grateful to Dom Gianluca Popolla for sharing his expertise on the early history of Susa and for providing helpful bibliographical details.

7. Roques 1971, 52, remarked that "L'étude des oeuvres de cet auteur tend à montrer que le VII^e siècle n'est pas totalement le siècle d'obscurantisme qu'on voulu dépeindre et que, dans certains regions, à Suse notamment, s'était maintenue une école d'un niveau de culture assez estimable."

for example, that during the Second Punic War of 218 B.C., the Carthaginian general Hannibal suffered heavy losses of men, horses, and elephants in the harsh winter following his victory by the banks of the Trebbia. Jonas, who relied on Livy, the Roman Augustan historian, for this information, mentions it in passing as he describes the site of Bobbio above this river.⁸ Jonas also evokes the pagan past of Luxeuil in his description of the Roman fort (*castrum*) converted by Columbanus into his second monastery. He mentions the baths built with the finest craftsmanship over the natural hot springs, a place that was, until Columbanus's arrival, haunted by wild beasts and where pagan stone images littered the surrounding woods.⁹ Moreover, in his decision to describe the rugged terrain of Besançon, Jonas followed the precedent of Julius Caesar, who gave a similar description of the town in his *De Bello Gallico*.¹⁰ But Jonas's classicism is perhaps most apparent from his reading of ancient Roman authors and from his display of that most Classical of characteristics, civic pride. This is seen in his reference to the town of his birth as "Susa, a famous city, which was once a colony of the Taurinati" (*Sigusia, urbs nobilis, quondam Taurinatum colonia*). The Taurini were an ancient Gallo-Ligurian people who gave their name to Turin.¹¹

Gregory the Great described the Italy of his time, ravaged by the Gothic wars of Justinian and the Lombard conquests of the sixth century, as "wretched and dejected" (*misera et deiecta*).¹² The military optimism of Justinian's reign was replaced by the beginning of the seventh century by a wearisome deadlock, as Italy became an arena of competing polities and fluctuating frontiers.¹³ The Lombards, whose invasion of Italy in 568 has been seen as "the beginning of the long history in Italy of particularism and of occupation by foreign powers," controlled about two-thirds of the peninsula by 600.¹⁴ Following the assassinations of the Lombard kings Alboin and Cleph in 572 and 574, respectively, and the subsequent fragmentation of power among the Lombard dukes, the Byzantines had unsuccessfully attempted to drive the Lombards out of Italy. From 574 to 590, the Lombards went on the defensive as they faced invasions from both Frankish and Byzantine armies. The election of Authari to the

8. VC 1.30: 221; see Livy, *Historiae* 21.58.11.

9. These can still be seen in the local municipal museum in Luxeuil. VC 1.10: 169; see Julius Caesar, *De Bello Gallico* 1.38.

10. VC 1.20: 193.

11. VC 2.5: 237–238.

12. Gregory the Great, *Ep.* 9.240, vol. 2: 823.5

13. In contrast to the universal pretensions of the empire and imperialist Christianity in Late Antiquity, there was, in the early medieval west, a greater perception of frontiers. See Goetz 2001.

14. Wickham 1981, 28. On Lombard history and archaeology, see also Christie 1995, 2006; Pohl and Diesenberger 2006; Wickham 2007.

kingship in 584 was in response to the concerted military threat faced by the dukes. It was only the reign of Agilulf, the duke of Turin, who married Authari's widow, Theodelinda and who was raised to the kingship in 590, that saw the stabilization and consolidation of the Lombard kingdom. Agilulf went on the offensive, recovering some of the territory lost to the Byzantines and wresting additional cities from imperial control. By 605, the Byzantines had reconciled themselves to the fact that the Lombards were not a transient problem, and stalemate set in as both sides consolidated their positions. A series of truces resulted in a stable peace that was only broken twice in the next 120 years.¹⁵

Jonas was born in this politically and religiously fractured Italy. He grew up in the early years of Agilulf's reign, when the Lombard kingdom was being consolidated, while the completion of his *VC* coincided both with the conquest of the Byzantine territories along the Ligurian coast by the Arian Lombard king Rothari and with the promulgation of this king's famous edict in 643. Jonas's *VC* and the Edict of Rothari constituted, according to one historian, "a modest renaissance for Lombard Italy."¹⁶ While the Edict of Rothari is a document that testifies to the political and ethnic fault lines in Italy, the experience of Susa in the decades before Jonas's birth can also be seen as illustrative of broader changes. Susa was situated on the boundaries of Byzantine, Frankish, and Lombard territories and was contested by all three. It does not appear, however, to have ever been part of the Lombard kingdom. It was still in Byzantine hands in the early 570s, a military outpost that had withstood the Lombard conquest. In this respect, it was like a handful of other strategic positions in northern Italy, such as Aosta and the fortified island of Comacina in Lake Como, which had remained imperial garrisons. In 574, Susa was under the control of Sisinnius, the imperial military commander in the region. However, Gregory of Tours, Fredegar, and Paul the Deacon all mention that Susa was ceded to the Franks following an incident in which Lombard warlords took refuge in the town after a failed invasion of Gaul. Gregory tells of how two of the Lombard leaders, Zaban and Rodan, following their severe defeat at Embrun by the Gallo-Roman general Mummolus, retreated to Italy, where they took refuge in Susa. He adds that they received a harsh welcome from the locals, but Sisinnius (for a reason unknown to us) nonetheless gave them asylum. Mummolus pursued the fugitives and sent a messenger on to Susa to inform Sisinnius of his imminent arrival, prompting the Lombards to leave. When Amo, the third member of the raiding party, who had been more successful, heard the news of his companions' defeat,

15. Wickham 1981, 33.

16. Wallace-Hadrill 1967, 57.

he likewise fled Gaul, “looting every place he came to on his route.”¹⁷ Neither Gregory nor Paul, who relied on Gregory’s account, note the outcome of this incident, which was the ceding of Susa to the Franks. For this, we rely on Fredegar’s account, which relates that “as retribution for their audacity,” the Lombards “ceded the cities of Aosta and Susa, with all their lands and inhabitants, to King Guntram,” as well as agreeing to pay a yearly tribute of 12,000 gold *solidi* to the Franks, whose overlordship they also acknowledged.¹⁸ Fredegar was mistaken in thinking that Aosta and Susa were Lombard cities—an understandable error if most of the surrounding territory was under Lombard control. Unlike Gregory and Paul, he also mentions nothing about Sisinnius or his decision to aid the fleeing Lombards (despite the fact that Gregory’s *Histories* in the short, six-book version was one of his major sources). Wallace-Hadrill suggested that Fredegar must have meant that the Lombards agreed to the town’s surrender, but there is no evidence for this.¹⁹ Rather, the Franks may have either seized or claimed Susa from the Byzantines for having given refuge to the Lombard dukes. In any case, the possession of such a strategic stronghold was expedient after the recent Lombard invasion. It remained in the *regnum Francorum* for centuries thereafter, and it was through the Susa valley that Charlemagne’s army marched into Italy, heralding the end for the Lombard kingdom in 774.

By the time of Jonas’s birth, Susa was under Frankish control. Although cis-alpine, its political orientation had shifted northward as it reflected the growing rise to dominance of the Franks. That it was still in imperial hands until 574 is important when assessing the level of Jonas’s education. Some semblance of the ancient school system may have continued in Susa, as it had in Rome and Ravenna. It is unlikely that Jonas received his liberal education at Bobbio, where the fledgling monastery would not have had a sufficient library by the time of Jonas’s entry.²⁰ Pierre Riché has stated that Jonas “undoubtedly” received his education at Susa, as Bobbio could not have “provided the monks with anything more than a religious culture.”²¹

JONAS’S SELF-IDENTIFICATION

Susa’s nodal position at the conflux of competing polities is also important when we consider the issue of Jonas’s ethnic identity or self-identification.

17. Gregory of Tours, *DLH* 4.44: 178–179. Translation by Thorpe, 240–241.

18. Fredegar 4.45: 38.

19. Fredegar 38 n. 1.

20. On the Bobbio library, see Engelbert 1968; Zironi 2004, 47–76; Richter 2008, 72–86.

21. Riché 1976, 344.

Early medieval ethnicity is, of course, a highly problematic area, the study of which has been described as “a dangerous and difficult undertaking.”²² It remains a subject of much debate. The issue revolves around whether the ethnic identity of early medieval population groups was fixed and inherent or whether it could be constructed and changed over time. Was it a primordial or a constructionist phenomenon? Did early medieval people have a fixed sense of their own identity as a particular *gens*, or was this a fluid concept that could change depending on circumstance?²³ Most scholars have accepted the latter view,²⁴ a concept once termed “ethnogenesis,” and perhaps this is the most useful way to approach Jonas’s complex ethnic background. Paul the Deacon in the late eighth century would include a remarkable account of his own family history in which his sense of Lombard identity is clearly apparent. He relates how one of the sons of his great-great-grandfather Leupchis, who took part in the Lombard invasion of Italy, escaped from captivity among the Avars and made his way back to Italy, where he remembered the people of the Lombards had settled (*quo gentem Langobardorum residere meminerat*).²⁵ After describing his great-grandfather’s eventful journey back to Italy, to the ruined house in which he was born, Paul gives the names of his grandfather, father, mother, and brother. There was no doubt about the Lombard heritage of Paul, son of Warnefrid and brother of Arichis. With Jonas, we are less sure. His biblical name gives no clue to his ethnic identity. He wrote of Bertulf, third abbot of Bobbio and the man who commissioned him to write the *Vita*, that he was “of noble, though barbarian, origin” (*genere nobilis, licet gentilis*) and a relative of Bishop Arnulf of Metz.²⁶ In early Christian Latin, the term *gentilis* usually means “pagan,” but it would seem unlikely that a high-ranking Merovingian aristocrat of the seventh century was a pagan. While *gentilis* could also be translated as the more neutral “of a different ethnicity” or “foreign,” by making a distinction between barbarian or foreign and presumably Roman origins, was Jonas making a statement about his own sense of identity? If we read the statement carefully, we see that Jonas is qualifying Bertulf’s family background—he was noble, but he was barbarian (*licet gentilis*). There is a similar marked differentiation in Fredegar, writing slightly later than

22. Geary 1983, 16.

23. The debate is summed up in Geary 2002. See also Pohl and Reimitz 1998 and part I of Noble 2006 on “Barbarian ethnicity and identity.” There are still some scholars who dissent from this approach. See, in particular, Goffart 2006; Gillett 2002. For a recent methodological profile, see Pohl 2013.

24. See, e.g., Smith 2005, 260–267; Wickham 2005, 82–83.

25. *HL* 4.37: 165. For a more nuanced and less straightforward reading of Paul’s Lombard identity, see Pohl 2010.

26. *VC* 2.23: 280 (see O’Hara and Wood 2017, 227).

Jonas, between “Roman” and “barbarian.”²⁷ This is probably no indication of ethnic allegiances,²⁸ but it is interesting nonetheless that Jonas makes the differentiation.

Jonas was conscious of the Classical past and of Italy’s preeminent position in the ancient world. This is best seen in the remarkable hymn he wrote in praise of Columbanus at the end of Book 1. It is full of Classical allusions. With skillful hyperbole, Jonas praised Columbanus’s saintly fame as having eclipsed the great deeds and figures of Antiquity. Neither the deeds recounted by Homer and Virgil nor those of the great men of ancient Rome—Scipio, Sulla, Gracchus, not even “the man of iron,” Caesar (*ferreus Caesar*)—could equal Columbanus’s saintly deeds.²⁹ Jonas’s Roman or Italian identity (his cultural ethnicity) is also evident from his statement toward the end of his letter to the abbots where he is contrasting the richness and exoticism of the east with the simpler fare of the west: “They draw a great deal of attention to the exotic fruits of the palm tree; in our case of Ausonia, according to the poet, we have ripe apples and soft chestnuts” (*nobis Ausoniae iuxta poetam sunt*).³⁰ The ripe apples and soft chestnuts are those of Virgil, *Eclogues* 1.80, which Jonas has adapted. Krusch included in his edition the word *Ausonia*, the archaic term for Italy, which Jonas uses elsewhere but which does not appear in the two earliest manuscripts, those of St Gallen and Metz. It could well be a later interpolation, but the majority of the manuscript witnesses have this phrase, which led Krusch to publish it in his edition. If the word is indeed Jonas’s, this would be a clear indicator of self-identification—it literally means “to us of Italy.” Here the term is used as the poetical and classicizing name for Italy favored by Virgil. This would have been a deliberate choice of terminology, as Jonas also used the term *Italia* a total of eight times in his hagiography.

A similar cisalpine orientation is seen in Jonas’s interesting comments on beer, where it is apparent that he was writing from the perspective of those whose habitual drink was wine. Beer, he explained, was a “drink fermented

27. Fredegar, for example, mentions Merovingian kings such as Chlothar I taking possession of cities *rito barbaro*, while he sometimes differentiates between those of Frankish and Roman birth. Although *barbarus* started off as a marker of “non-Romanness,” Fredegar may be using the term here as a generally negative slur to indicate conduct that was not befitting a Merovingian king. Elsewhere, the patrician Quolen is presented as *genere Francus*, as is Bertoald, mayor of the palace, while Protadius, the lover of Queen Brunhild, was *genere Romanus*. Fredegar 4.17: 11; 4.18: 14; 4.24: 15. On Roman identity in the Early Middle Ages, see Pohl 2012; Greatrex 2000.

28. See Ewig 1976, 231–273.

29. *Vel comparantur sanctis seclorum gesta factis? . . . Nihil dignum simile horum gessere gestis. VC, Versus ad mensam canendi: 225.*

30. VC, *Epistula ad Waldebertum et Bobolenum: 148.*

from the juice of grain or barley that is drunk by all the peoples in the world who live close to Ocean, in addition to the Scordisci and the Dardanians. It is drunk in Gaul, Britain, Ireland, *Germania*, and in other places where the people have not dissimilar customs.”³¹ Adalbert de Vogüé read this as one example showing that the *Vita* was primarily intended for an Italian audience.³² Jonas’s comments, which he makes in the context of narrating a beer miracle that took place in Luxeuil, are also illustrative of his broader horizons. Jonas is making a geographical distinction here. Drinking beer was an indication of which region in Europe one came from, albeit the regions included many peoples. Those living on the fringes of Ocean—Gauls, Britons, Irish, and Germans, as well as the Scordisci and the Dardanians in the Balkans—were characterized by their drinking of beer. There is a similar ethnographic and geographic awareness throughout the *Vita*. This is all the more notable because it contrasts with other narrative sources from this period where, on the whole, it was rare for people to be identified by their ethnic groups.³³ However, as Helmut Reimitz recently argued, not everybody agreed in the Early Middle Ages that ethnic identification was an important way to distinguish groups from one another.³⁴ It is also possible that Jonas was more interested in names as markers of places rather than as markers of birth and political affiliation.

Nonetheless, Jonas characterized various people as “Lombard,” “Frankish,” “Burgundian,” “Irish,” “British,” “Saxon,” “Suebian,” and “Syriac.” In some cases, specifically when writing about the Lombards and the Franks, Jonas used these terms when designating kings, while in others he was less status-specific. Athala, for example, was *ex Burgundionorum genere*,³⁵ while the nun Willesuinda was *ex genere Saxonorum*.³⁶ Columbanus, while gathering the harvest during bad weather at Fontaine, placed four monks at each corner of the field: Cominus, Eunocus, and Equonanus were, Jonas notes, *ex Scottorum genere*, while the fourth, Gurganus, was *genere Brittonem*.³⁷ This ethnographic pedanticism is extraordinary. Jonas’s few references to the Lombards all concerned their kings. Although Jonas (in contrast to Paul the Deacon) viewed them as Arian

31. *ex frumenti vel hordei sucos equoquitur, quamque prae ceteris in orbe terrarum gentibus preter Scordiscis et Dardanis gentes quae Oceanum incolunt usitantur, id est Gallia, Brittania, Hibernia, Germania, ceteraeque ab eorum moribus non disciscunt.* VC 1.16: 179 (O’Hara and Wood 2017, 128).

32. De Vogüé 1988b, 50 n. 41.

33. Geary 1983, 21.

34. Reimitz 2015.

35. VC 2.1: 230.

36. VC 2.17: 268.

37. VC 1.13: 174.

heretics, he did not use the pejorative rhetoric found, for example, in Gregory the Great's letters.³⁸ He did not identify with the Lombards in any way. Neither did he identify with the Franks, although he attested to their preeminence in Gaul. "Their name," he wrote, "is considered foremost before all the other peoples who live in Gaul."³⁹ He was writing as an outsider. In telling of the time one of Columbanus's gloves was stolen and returned by a raven at Luxeuil, he noted that the Gallic name for "gloves" (*tegumenta manuum*) was *wantos*.⁴⁰ This piece of linguistic trivia indicates a distinction Jonas made between what he called a glove and what the Gauls called it. Another instance is his reference to the Neustrian Franks. Jonas noted that Chlothar II was a king ruling over the Neustrian Franks, who, he added, were those Franks who lived in "the furthest confines of Gaul by Ocean."⁴¹ There would have been no need to give a geographical indication of where the Neustrian Franks lived for a Frankish audience, but maybe there was for an Italian audience.⁴² Jonas was primarily writing from an Italian perspective.⁴³

These examples reflect Jonas's awareness that he and those he wrote about lived in a multiethnic world. This perception would have reinforced by his experience of monastic life in a community made up of Irish, British, Burgundian, Frankish, and Lombard monks, among others. Nevertheless, these distinctions were not highlighted by more precise descriptions of the ways in which different peoples could be distinguished.⁴⁴ He did not mention, for example, the famed long hair of the Frankish kings.⁴⁵ He was also silent on Lombard habits of hairstyle and dress, which were notable features for Paul the Deacon.⁴⁶ While Jonas was conscious of different ethnic groups, he was not particularly concerned to further illustrate their differences.

38. Gregory disliked "the unspeakable nation of the Lombards," while the phrase "swords of the Lombards" repeatedly appears in his letters. See Markus 1997, 99.

39. *quorum eximium nomen prae ceteris gentibus quae Gallias incolunt habetur*. VC 1.6: 162.

40. VC 1.15: 178. *Gants* in modern French. It is interesting that *Handschuhe*, the modern German for "gloves," is semantically closer to the Latin phrase. On the episode of the stolen glove, see Diem 2016b.

41. *qui Neustrasis Francs regnabat, extrema Gallia ad Oceanum positus*. VC 1.24: 206–207.

42. Jonas used the term Frank more widely than the anonymous author of the *Vita Audoini*, writing toward the end of the seventh century, whose use of the term was applied exclusively to the Neustrians. See Fouracre and Gerberding 1996, 133.

43. De Vogüé 1988b, 128 n. 6, 153 n. 1.

44. On the various ways in which Jonas could have distinguished the ethnic groups he wrote about, see Pohl 2006.

45. His account of King Theudebert's deposition and forced clericalization would have been a perfect opportunity to mention the long hair of the Frankish kings, but Jonas does not do so. VC 1.28: 219.

46. HL 4.22: 155.

RETURN TO SUSA

Although Jonas was not as revealing as Paul the Deacon about his ethnic and family background, he did include an account of his return to Susa and a visit he made to his family nine years after he had become a monk at Bobbio. It is thanks to this account that we know Jonas came from Susa and can approximately date his entry into Bobbio. It is also remarkable for the fact that Jonas wrote about himself and specifically about an unusual miracle that occurred to him before the death of Abbot Athala. Jonas's kinsfolk (*parentes*) in Susa had often asked Athala to allow Jonas to see them, but the abbot had always refused. Then, unexpectedly, Athala told Jonas to return to Susa to visit his mother and brother and then to return quickly to the monastery.⁴⁷ As it was February and very cold, Jonas protested, saying that he would rather undertake the journey another time, but the abbot insisted. Jonas was accompanied on the trip by the priest Blidulf and the deacon Hermenoald, men "whose religious commitment was in no doubt" (*de quorum religioni nihil dubitabatur*). Jonas's characteristic attention to detail, especially when it came to topography, is evident here when he notes the distance (140 miles) between Susa and Bobbio.⁴⁸ When he arrived home in Susa, Jonas noted his mother's joy at seeing him again after so many years. That night, however, he came down with a severe fever and began to shout out that the prayers of his abbot were tormenting him (*me viri Dei precibus torqueri*). He could no longer remain in his family home in defiance of his abbot's wishes and would die if he did not quickly return to the monastery: "If they could not quickly remove me and if I could not return quickly to the monastery, I would soon die."⁴⁹ Jonas's mother resigned herself that it was better for him to be alive in a monastery than dead at home. When dawn finally came—"I confess that it was a long time until the coming of day"⁵⁰—Jonas and his companions set out. In their haste, they ate nothing for three days until they reached the midpoint of their journey. The closer they came to the monastery, the better Jonas began to feel.⁵¹ When they came to Bobbio, the reason for Jonas's sudden fever became apparent: Athala himself was on the point of death, and Jonas's own illness had been a means to get him to return to the monastery in time to bid farewell to his abbot. Jonas attributed his near-fatal experience in

47. "Vade festinus, fili, et matrem fratremque visita; mone et nulla mora praepediente revertere." VC 2.5: 237.

48. VC 2.5: 238.

49. *si non me cito submoveant, quocumque potuissem conamine, ad monasterium repedare, me cito morte preventum.* VC 2.5: 238.

50. *Fateor, longum fuit diei expectare adventum.* VC 2.5: 238.

51. This miracle could also be read in relation to Columbanian concepts of sacred space.

Susa to Athala's prayers. In this personal account of his return to his hometown, Jonas emphasized the spiritual force field of the monastery (he got better the closer he came to the monastery) and the dangers of maintaining contact with one's family on entering monastic life, aspects he also highlighted elsewhere in the VC, in the VJ, and in the *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines*.⁵²

This account is also important because it reveals that Jonas was born and grew up in a town. During this period, many aristocrats in Italy chose to live in towns rather than in the countryside,⁵³ and given Jonas's liberal education and the high social status of other Columbanian monks, it is likely that he also came from an aristocratic background, perhaps with links to the former Byzantine imperial administration.

MONK OF BOBBIO

Jonas was born on the edge of the Lombard kingdom. His decision to become a monk at Bobbio brought him from one edge of the kingdom to another while still remaining within a border area.⁵⁴ The new monastery of Bobbio was strategically located close to the Byzantine-controlled coast of Liguria and on a communication network that linked the Lombard capital at Pavia with Rome.⁵⁵ Agilulf's donation to Columbanus of the basilica of Saint Peter at Bobbio on July 25, 613—where the monks were “to beseech the Lord day and night for the safety and stability of our kingdom”—was, aside from the spiritual motivations, a political act.⁵⁶ The foundation of Bobbio between Pavia and Rome was an extension of the Lombard polity's rapprochement with the papacy. It also proved beneficial for the papacy, providing it with a broker within the Lombard kingdom.⁵⁷

Columbanus entered an Italy that was both politically and religiously divided. Bobbio, in turn, reflected these fault lines as it straddled political and religious divides. Situated near the borders of two rival polities and in a society where Christians were either Arian heretics or schismatic Catholics, Bobbio

52. See VC 1.2 (on Columbanus's mother); VJ (on John's mother); *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines* 23 (on not defending a relative in the monastery).

53. See Wickham 2005, 605–606; 2009b, 122. On the importance of cities in Lombard Italy, see Harrison 1993.

54. On Bobbio, see Richter 2008; Zironi 2004; Destefanis 2002, 2005.

55. This was the case until 643, when Liguria was conquered and absorbed into the Lombard kingdom by the Lombard king Rothari. On Bobbio's nodal position, see Nuvolone 2000.

56. The king stated that no one was to transgress the precepts of the charter, as the monastery was founded *pro salute et stabilitate regni nostri Dominum valeatis die noctuque deprecare*. CDB 3: 89.

57. Zironi 2004, 5, noted: “Da una parte la corte longobarda vede nell'abbazia una presenza fondamentale per il controllo del territorio appenninico confinante con la Liguria che, sino ai tempi di Rotari, resta bizantina; il papato dall'altra ha in Bobbio un fedele ambasciatore presso i re longobardi.”

has rightly been characterized as an anomaly.⁵⁸ A monastery patronized by successive Lombard kings, it was unique in northern Italy at this time.

The monastery in which Jonas became a monk was an important royal foundation, strategically located on the edge of the Apennines. Jonas's account of his monastery's foundation is the most detailed and evocative of his descriptions of Columbanus's monastic sites.⁵⁹ Running through his account is a sense that Bobbio was a sacred place chosen by God, the culmination and fulfillment of Columbanus's ascetic exile on the Continent. In none of Jonas's other accounts of Columbanus's foundations is there a similar sense of divine guidance in the establishment of his monasteries. Columbanus's decision to go to Italy in the first place was attributed by Jonas to an angelic vision. When Columbanus was in Alamannia, he was told by the angel not to go east to preach to the Slavs but instead to head south into Italy.⁶⁰ This divine intervention set the tone for Columbanus's encounter with the Lombard king in Milan and his choice of Bobbio as the site for his last foundation. Jonas described the process by which Columbanus came to choose Bobbio as having come about through divine circumstance rather than the decision of the king. He tells of how Columbanus was welcomed by Agilulf and granted permission to settle wherever he wished within the kingdom. Columbanus's decision to settle at Bobbio came about through divine aid (*Dei consultu actum est*) and, incidentally, through information he had heard from a man named Jocundus.⁶¹ Jocundus, who had come to the king in Milan, told him about a church in the Apennine countryside where miracles took place. This was a holy place, and, as was standard when describing such *loci sancti*, it was visually apparent: "It was a bountiful fertile place, with refreshing waters, and an abundance of fish."⁶² When Columbanus came to the site, at the confluence of two rivers, the Bobbio and the Trebbia, he found a dilapidated old basilica (*semirutata basilica*), which he set about renovating. The project of rebuilding was accompanied by miracles. Jonas noted that the saint and his monks received Samsonesque strength when they succeeded in carrying on their backs huge trunks of timber felled from the surrounding slopes. Trunks that thirty or forty men could scarcely lift were now carried by a few monks, "with steady steps and with all the ease of ramblers."⁶³

58. Zironi 2004, 5, referred to Bobbio as "un sede monastica particolare." See also Gasparri forthcoming.

59. VC 1.30: 220–222.

60. VC 1.27: 216–217.

61. VC 1.30: 220–221.

62. *loca ubertate fecunda, aquis inrigua, piscium copia*. VC 1.30: 221.

63. *firmis vestigiis, velut otio vagantes ovantes irent*: VC 1.30: 222.

It is clear from Jonas's description of Bobbio's foundation that this was a place chosen by God, a place that, even before Columbanus's arrival, had been sanctified by miracles. This is very different from Jonas's accounts of Columbanus's other monastic sites, places Jonas evokes as being haunted by a pagan presence. In none of the other accounts does Jonas report miracles that accompanied the building of the monastery. All of this enhances his depiction of Bobbio as a *locus sanctus*.⁶⁴ As in the case of Luxeuil, Jonas downplayed the role of the king as an active agent in the foundation process. He did not, for example, mention Agilulf's 613 charter of foundation or any of the other royal charters subsequently granted to the community. Agilulf's charter provides additional information not found in Jonas's more atmospheric account. It reveals the extent of the endowment—four square miles of cultivated and uncultivated land—but also that the site was not as isolated as Jonas's *in solitudine ruribus Appenninis* would imply; the community had to share a well (*puteus*) or perhaps a thermal spring with a previous royal beneficiary named Sundrarit.⁶⁵ Sundrarit has been identified as a Lombard warlord, termed a *maximus dux Langobardorum* in a contemporary chronicle and a *vir magnificus* in a later royal charter for Bobbio. Sundrarit is reputed to have defeated the Exarch Eleutherius so decisively that as a result, the Byzantines petitioned for peace with the Lombards.⁶⁶ The community, therefore, shared the adjacent territory with a prominent Lombard leader, and there may also have been a Lombard military presence in the area.⁶⁷ Alessandro Zironi has, moreover, suggested that Jocundus was probably a royal official of Agilulf's who consciously chose the site for its strategic location. The phrase *optione loci largita*, which appears in some of the manuscripts, could in this sense mean a place that was more suitable to Lombard interests than it was to Columbanus's.⁶⁸ Although Agilulf's charter makes clear what the principal function of the monastery was—the community was established for the welfare and stability of the kingdom, and the monks were to pray day and night for this purpose—there were possibly other political motivations. Jonas, however, was more concerned to give an idyllic account of Bobbio's foundation than to provide the political background for its foundation. He was not interested in

64. Destefanis 2005, 25–26, has described Jonas as “il grande costruttore della memoria bobbiese.” For a later perception of Bobbio as a *locus sanctus* seen from the northern Frankish monastic community of Fontanella/St. Wandrille at the turn of the eighth century, see *Vita Wandregiseli* 9: 17. See also Wood 1998 on Jonas's description of Bobbio.

65. *CDB* 3: 89. On Columbanus's establishment of his monastic sites in relation to thermal springs and route networks, see O'Hara 2015.

66. On Sundrarit, see Jarnut 1972, 369.

67. Zironi 2004, 17–18.

68. Zironi 2004, 10–11.

the “*politica religiosa*” of the Lombard monarchy.⁶⁹ He mentions nothing, for example, of the visit of Queen Theodelinda, and later her son, King Adaloald, to Bobbio when the community acquired a nearby mountain in addition to having its possessions reconfirmed.⁷⁰ For Paul the Deacon, it was specifically this royal and aristocratic largesse that made Bobbio so noteworthy.⁷¹ In contrast, Jonas was not interested in Bobbio as a royal foundation and the close ties to the Lombard court that this entailed, although he did praise Ariowald, who gave Abbot Bertulf and companions public support for travel to Rome. Jonas was keen to minimize (in his literary representation, at least) the role of royal and noble families in founding these communities. In this regard, he followed closely Columbanus’s original ideal of trying to maintain the independence of these communities from external influence.

By the time Jonas came to write the *VC*, he had been a monk for around twenty years, although not all of that time had been spent at Bobbio. It is clear, however, that Bobbio had a special place in his mind. He would have entered the community as a young man, perhaps in his late teens or early twenties. The date of his entry can be well established thanks to his account of his visit to Susa shortly before the death of Abbot Athala, where he notes that he had been a monk at Bobbio for nine years.⁷² Although he does not mention the year of the abbot’s death, this can be worked out independently. Either 618 or 617 is the date generally given by most scholars as the year of Jonas’s entry.⁷³ This dating, however, is incorrect. Athala became abbot on the death of Columbanus in November 615, and March 10 is considered the date of his death, so we can work out that he died in 625. We know that Jonas had been a monk for nine years when Athala died, so we can deduce that in November 624, Athala would have been abbot for nine years. Again, he must therefore have died in 625. This implies that Jonas became a monk early in 616. This is only a few months after Columbanus died at the monastery on November 23, 615. Although Jonas probably never met Columbanus (we assume), his entry into the monastery so soon after the saint’s death is important when considering the quality of his information about his subject. The *VC* is the work of a near contemporary.

Jonas’s entry into the monastery also raises the question of whether he took a religious name on becoming a monk. The Hebrew name Jonas/Jonah is very rare in the Middle Ages, and so we need to consider whether this had a

69. See, e.g., Majocchi 2000; Mor 1933.

70. *CDB* 7: 95–96; see Richter 2008, 58, for discussion.

71. *HL* 4.41: 168–169.

72. *VC* 2.5: 237.

73. See, e.g., Bullough 1997, 1; de Vogüé 1988b, 19; Cugnier 1965, 8.

particular significance for its bearer. Did his family single him out from birth for an ecclesiastical career by giving him such a name, or did he himself choose it to mark a new religious identity? Names are, of course, potent indicators of identity, whether individual, ethnic, devotional, or familial, and this was especially true in the Early Middle Ages.⁷⁴ In early medieval society, where the vast majority of people bore Germanic names, Jonas would have stood out by his name alone. At Bobbio, for instance, he would have been in the company of men such as Baudacharius, Blidemundus, Fraimeris, Hermenoaldus, Meroveus, and Theudoaldus, all of whom bore Germanic names.⁷⁵ Christian names were much less prevalent during this period than they would be in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, when a revolution in the Christianization of naming practices took place. In sixth-century Ravenna, for example, only 6 percent of names were Christian, while the peasants of the church of Saint Martin of Tours in the seventh century, with the exception of Peter, bore no scriptural names.⁷⁶ Thus, while Christian names on the whole were rare, Old Testament names were extremely rare.⁷⁷ Jonas's is the only instance of this name known from Lombard Italy.⁷⁸ The rarity of the name can also be seen in later monastic books of commemoration that became popular from the Carolingian period onward.⁷⁹ Remiremont, a Columbanian foundation in Burgundy, which Jonas mentions, began commemorating its dead by writing their names in a book in the early ninth century.⁸⁰ This *Liber Memorialis* lists around 11,500 names, most of which are Germanic. The name "Jonas" appears three times. Likewise, the island monastery of Reichenau on Lake Constance, which had close ties to St Gallen, lists ten instances of the name "Jonas" in its famous necrology containing around 40,000 names.⁸¹ This gives some idea of the rarity and hence significance of the name.

Columbanus himself identified with the plight of the prophet Jonah when he was about to embark from Nantes for Ireland in 610. The Irish saint on other occasions clearly associated himself with the Old Testament prophet, the

74. See, e.g., Wilson 1998, esp. 86–114 (on Christian names); Jarnut 1996.

75. On the sixteen Bobbio monks mentioned by Jonas and the areas they may have come from, see Zironi 2004, 28–46. Zironi argued on this evidence that Irish monks were not prominent in the early community. This was likewise the conclusion of Engelbert 1968, 260, who considered the evidence of the earliest manuscripts and noted that the Irish presence does not appear until the beginning of the eighth century. However, Richter 2008 has revindicated the Irish presence in and influence on Bobbio.

76. Wilson 1998, 86–87.

77. Wilson 1998, 88.

78. Jarnut 1972, 150. On Lombard naming practices in general, see Arcamone 1997.

79. On these sources, see Huyghebaert 1972.

80. See index under "Jonas" in *Liber Memorialis von Remiremont*.

81. See index under "Jonas" in *Das Verbrüderungsbuch der Abtei Reichenau*.

only ancient prophet in the New Testament whom Jesus identified explicitly by name.⁸² In letters to two popes, Columbanus emphasized the spiritual nature of his name: in Latin (Columba) and Hebrew (Jonah), it meant “the dove.” In his letter to Gregory the Great, he used the Hebrew version, *ego, Bar-Iona (vilis Columba), in Christo mitto Salutem*,⁸³ alluding to Saint Peter in Matthew’s gospel when Jesus refers to him as Simon Bar-Jonah (Matt. 16: 17) following his profession of faith. In his letter to Boniface IV, written from Milan, Columbanus wrote: “I am called Jonah in Hebrew, Peristera in Greek, Columba in Latin, yet so much is my birth-right in the idiom of your language, though I use the ancient Hebrew name of Jonah, whose shipwreck I have also almost undergone.”⁸⁴ Jonah’s exit from the whale after three days was also understood as a symbol of the resurrection. There is therefore both a Christological and a Petrine significance to Columbanus’s use of the name, which would not have escaped his readers’ notice. Perhaps this was a way for Columbanus to further stress his orthodoxy and commitment to being a true follower of Christ.

Could Jonas’s name in turn reflect a conscious decision by the monk to identify himself with Columbanus, or was the name given to him by Athala and the community upon his entry into monastic life? Alex Woolf has recently suggested that the name Columba may have been given to both Columbanus and Columba on their entry into monastic life in Ireland and that even the name of the island of Iona may be associated with this Christian marker of identity, with its associations with the Holy Spirit and baptism.⁸⁵ If Jonas entered Bobbio soon after Columbanus’s death, Athala may have continued this practice by giving him the “dove” name. It is particularly noteworthy and unusual because all the other Bobbio monks bore Germanic names, and they do not appear to have taken religious names. Undoubtedly, the name would have had a significance within the monastic community at Bobbio and in the wider Columbanian network.

Jonas had a privileged position within the Bobbio community. He was the *minister* or personal assistant to two Bobbio abbots, Athala and Bertulf, a position that may have included the tasks of archivist and librarian in the monastery. Jonas’s learning would have singled him out as an obvious candidate for *minister* to the abbot and later as the hagiographer of the community’s founder. He was thus in a unique position to acquire information about the life of Columbanus.

82. Matt. 12: 38–42; 16: 1–4; Luke 11: 29–32.

83. *Ep.* 11: 1.

84. *mihi Ionae hebraice, Peristerae graece, Columbae latine, potius tantum vestrae idiomate linguae nanto, licet prisco utor hebraeo nomine, cuius et pene subivi naufragium.* *Ep.* 5.16: 54.

85. Woolf forthcoming.

He had access not only to the saint's writings but also to the men who had known him personally. This was particularly true of Athala, who had been Columbanus's *minister* and to whom Columbanus had entrusted Luxeuil on his banishment in 610. It was primarily to Athala, "my true follower," that Columbanus addressed his moving letter from Nantes.⁸⁶ Following Athala's death in 625, Jonas continued as *minister* to Bertulf, but it is uncertain for how long. Jonas cites the abbot of Luxeuil, Eustasius, as one of his sources, which could be seen as evidence that Jonas spent some time in Luxeuil before Eustasius's death in 629. This need not have been the case. Jonas notes that "we have learnt" (*didicimus*) things about Columbanus from both Athala and Eustasius,⁸⁷ while he also names Eustasius as the informant of a miracle that occurred at Bregenz. His precise words are "we have heard mention" (*cognovimus referentem*) from Eustasius.⁸⁸ Jonas could have accompanied Athala when he visited Luxeuil, as there seems to have been an active exchange of monks between the two monasteries.⁸⁹

Jonas traveled to Rome in the summer of 628 in the company of his abbot, Bertulf.⁹⁰ He gave a detailed account of the circumstances behind the journey and of a miraculous event that occurred on the return trip. Following attempts by the local bishop, Probus of Tortona, to gain control over the monastery, Bertulf decided to appeal directly to Pope Honorius I in Rome. Both the bishop and the abbot had tried unsuccessfully to enlist the support of the Lombard king, Ariowald, but the king had refused to become involved in ecclesiastical affairs. Ariowald, however, though an Arian heretic,⁹¹ agreed to fund the abbot's journey. Fitted out "in royal style" (*regio cultu*), Bertulf and a number of Bobbio monks, including Jonas, set out for Rome.⁹² Having been well received by Honorius, who granted them their request and issued a privilege freeing the community from episcopal control,⁹³ they decided to leave soon afterward, as the abbot had fallen ill. Midway through the journey, "having set behind us the fields of Tuscany, we reached the countryside of the Apennines,"⁹⁴ Bertulf came down with fever. The party stopped for the night in the ruined hilltop fort of Bismantum near Modena. Jonas's detailed eyewitness account of what happened on the night of June 28, 628, is worth quoting at length:

86. *Ep.* 4.

87. *VC* prologue: 145.

88. *VC* 1.27: 215.

89. *VC* 2.23: 281. Jonas's contacts with leading Columbanian figures was extensive.

90. *VC* 2.23: 282–284.

91. *quamvis a barbaro et Arrianae sectae credulum*. *VC* 2.23: 282.

92. *VC* 2.23: 282.

93. *VC* 2.23: 283; *CDB* 10: 102–103.

94. *peracto itineris spatio, Tuscanam arva postposita, Appennina attigimus rura*. *VC* 2.23: 283.

Both the sorrows of such a long journey, and the struggle of the sick father, weighed heavily on all of us, nor did anyone at all have any hope for his recovery. When the tent had been pitched in a harsh place, oppressed by sorrow on every side, and not all confident that the father would recover, we were afraid. It was then the vigil of the feast of the martyrdom of the blessed apostles, Peter and Paul. And as black night rushed in, while in the flames of his fever, he sent for me, and, his mind given over to cares, he asked me about the nocturnal vigils. And when I told him that everything had been arranged, he says: "Keep watch in front of my bed for the whole length of the night, until the dawn breaks into day." And when I had lain down, as the dead of night came, so great a sleep weighed on me that I was unable to lift up my head, and all who were watching the baggage or horses by the tent were likewise overcome by sleep. When silence had covered everything, the blessed prince of the apostles Peter came and stood over the bed of the sick abbot. "Get up," he says, "and help your companions." And when Bertulf asked him who he was, he replies: "Peter. Today my famous solemnities are celebrated throughout the world."⁹⁵

This dramatic miracle in which Saint Peter heals the sick abbot is laden with symbolic significance. It took place on the saint's feast day (celebrated liturgically from sunset of the previous day to the following sunset), as the abbot was returning to his monastery dedicated to the same saint, having obtained a papal privilege from the successor of Peter. The account could be seen as the supernatural ratification of Bobbio's newly won privilege by Saint Peter himself. It is, moreover, a good example of the vividness of Jonas's writing and an illustration of the close relationship he had with his abbot.

Jonas would remain committed to Columbanus's stance that monasteries should remain separate from episcopal and lay control. Monasteries had to rely on aristocratic, ecclesiastical, and royal patronage, but at the same time the spiritual integrity and boundaries of these places needed to be safeguarded. This

95. *Oppresserat omnes maestitia tam longevi itineris quam labor aegri patris, nec prorsus eius de sospitate spem habentes, tenso tentorio, aspera in loca, undique vallati maestitia nec omnino de sospitate paterna fidentes, metati sumus. Erat enim vigilia passionis beatorum Petri et Pauli apostolorum. Cumque iam atra nox intruerit, ille inter ignes febrium me arcessivit ac curis mens dedita de nocturna vigilia sciscitavit. Cumque ego dicerem omnia iam esse disposita, ille ait: "Tu meum ante stratum tota per noctis meta, quousque diei prorumpat crepusculum, excuba." Cum ergo excubassem, quousque intempesta nox ruerit, tantus me spoor oppressit, ut sursum caput attollere non valerem, omnesque qui erga tentorium sarcinas vel aequos excubant, simile sunt oppressi sopore. Cumque ergo cuncta silentia operissent, beatus apostolorum princeps Petrus advenit ac super stratum aegri patris adstetit: "Surge," inquit, "et sospes tuos ad sodales perge." Cumque ille inquireret, quis esset, ille ait: "Petrus; mea hodie clara in toto orbe celebrantur sollemnia." VC 2.23: 283–284 (O'Hara and Wood 2017, 230–231).*

was the thinking behind the trend in obtaining these new diplomatic warrants, for which the papal privilege of 628 was an important precedent. The Bobbio exemption became the standard model for papal privileges in the Early Middle Ages.⁹⁶

BOBBIO AS A MISSION CENTER

Contact with Rome is also important when considering Bobbio as a missionary center. Although there is no reference to it in the privilege, Jonas mentions Honorius's desire that Bertulf and his monks continue their work in combating the Arian heresy among the Lombards.⁹⁷ It is clear from Jonas that the Arian heresy was a divisive problem that needed to be tackled. There was nothing ambiguous, for example, about the encounter between the Bobbio monk Blidulf, the priest who had accompanied Jonas home to Susa, and the thugs of Ariowald, duke of Turin and future king of the Lombards.⁹⁸

Blidulf, having been sent to Pavia by Abbot Athala, encountered Ariowald with some of his men on a street. The monk refused to greet the duke, as he was a heretic, but gave him a short lesson in Trinitarian theology instead.⁹⁹ Ariowald complained, asking why none of his servants was cruel enough to kill the monk. That night, one of Ariowald's men and an accomplice ambushed Blidulf, beat him, and left him for dead. When the monk's host, a priest in the town, became worried about Blidulf's late return, concerned "that he might have fallen among the Arians,"¹⁰⁰ he set out to look for him. The priest found Blidulf lying in the street as if asleep. Blidulf, unaware of having been assaulted, awoke unharmed and swore he had never slept so well. The culprit, however, became possessed. Ariowald sent the possessed man and some of his men to Bobbio to seek pardon from the abbot and to placate him with gifts. The demoniac was healed, but Athala refused to accept the gifts "of the impious and heretical man."¹⁰¹ The healed would-be murderer later showed no remorse and bragged of his deed; he was instantly struck dead.¹⁰²

96. See Wood 1998; Anton 1975, 55–57.

97. *Tenuit ergo eum quantisper, et cottidiano effamine Bertulfum roborare nisus, ut cepti itineris laborem non relinqueret et Arrianae pestis perfidiam euangelico mucrone ferire non abnueret.* VC 2.23: 283.

98. VC 2.24: 286–289. Pohl 2000, 57–58, argues that the confessional ambiguities during this period "were the basis of political and religious compromise that kept the troubled situation in Italy from exploding and made it possible that three different Christian confessions coexisted over one hundred years without excessive unrest or bloodshed, a rare occurrence in the history of the Church." Fanning 1981 has also downplayed the Lombards' adherence to Arianism.

99. VC 2.24: 286–287.

100. VC 2.24: 287.

101. *munera impii hac heretici hominis numquam in perpetuum suscipere:* VC 2.24: 288.

102. VC 2.24: 289.

The account complements Paul the Deacon's statement that in the cities there were both Arian and Catholic clergy.¹⁰³ Blidulf's presence in Pavia might indicate that Bobbio continued an active anti-Arian policy, which Columbanus had adopted in Milan, where he preached and wrote a polemical tract against the heresy.¹⁰⁴ Jonas is not explicit on this, however. The Bobbio community was nonetheless an influential presence of Catholic orthodoxy in a kingdom where many of the Lombard elite were Arian Christians.

The Bobbio community may also have been active in missionary work in the countryside.¹⁰⁵ Zironi has suggested that the monastery's missionary efforts may have been primarily targeted toward the pagan Lombard militia stationed in the area.¹⁰⁶ I have already mentioned how the community had to share half a well with the Lombard warlord Sundrarit. As Bobbio was near the border with the Byzantine-controlled Ligurian coast, the community may have had some contact with the Lombard troops stationed in the Apennine valleys. During the seventh century, the monastery established a number of cells along communication networks between Pavia, Tortona, Voghera, Lucca, and Chiavari, strategic areas where Lombard troops were posted.¹⁰⁷ With Lombard military expansion under King Rothari into Liguria in 643, the monks followed suit, establishing further cells in the newly conquered areas, where they introduced new agricultural methods in the region.¹⁰⁸ Again, Jonas provides an example that reveals this missionary side of his community and one active method in which it combated paganism. The second abbot, Athala, sent Meroveus, whose name has aroused speculation about whether he might have been of Merovingian royal origin,¹⁰⁹ to the nearby town of Tortona on some unspecified business (*ob conditionem*). The monk, however, went some distance past the town to a country estate by the river Staffora, where he noticed a pagan temple among the trees.¹¹⁰ He duly burned it down. The "temple's disciples" (*fani cultores*) apprehended the monk, beat him severely, and then attempted to drown him in the river. When they

103. *HL* 4.42: 169.

104. *VC* 1.30: 221; *Ep.* 5.

105. The *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great give ample testimony to the pagan practices still prevalent in Italy during the sixth century; see Cracco 1980. On Lombard paganism, see also Brown 2009, 291–293; Everett 2003, 61–65; Mores 2010.

106. "È pressoché certo che i Longobardi stanziati nell'alta valle del Trebbia non fossero cristiani: l'abbandono della chiesa di S. Pietro, attorno alla quale sores poi il cenobio bobbiese . . . lascia condurre in questa direzione." Zironi 2004, 17.

107. Zironi 2004, 18.

108. Tosi 1992.

109. See Charles-Edwards 2000, 351 n. 37; O'Hara and Wood 2017, 165 n. 377, 235–236.

110. *longius ab urbe progressus ad quondam villam super Hiram fluvium accessit, in qua fanum, arboribus intersitis, progrediens vidit.* *VC* 2.25: 289.

failed in their initial attempts to drown him—even though the monk was prepared for martyrdom, the river refused to accept him—the pagans again threw him into the river and weighed him down. They left what they thought was his corpse. Meroveus, however, rose from the waves unharmed and made his way back to the monastery. As in the other account, Jonas then describes the various divine punishments inflicted on the culprits.¹¹¹ As with the Arian heretics in the first case, the culprits made their way to Bobbio, where some were healed. This account, therefore, like that of Blidulf's encounter with the Arians in Pavia, is instructive not only for revealing tensions latent in northern Italy at this time but also for what it indicates about Bobbio's role as a missionary center, which may have provoked opposition similar to the forceful proselytization of Columbanus and Gallus in the area around Lake Constance. Jonas's accounts of "pagan" practice need to be assessed in relation to broader cultural practices and folk traditions, which may have been denigrated by Christians whose concept of religious devotion may have differed from that of others. But, as I have argued elsewhere, Columbanus appears to have pursued a conscious strategy of appropriation of ancient cult sites and was concerned with combating practices he would have considered pagan.¹¹² Bobbio seems to have continued this approach after Columbanus's death. Although Bobbio may well not have been as influential as its Frankish twin, Luxeuil, it, too, was clearly concerned in its own way with evangelization, and we should not underestimate its missionary activity.¹¹³

NORTH: ASSISTING BISHOP AMANDUS

In the late 630s, Jonas became a missionary in Flanders. In considering the background for Jonas's missionary activity, we need to determine whether Jonas had prior missionary experience in the Apennines. In his letter of dedication to the abbots, for example, he notes that when he was asked to write the VC by Bertulf and the Bobbio community, he was "spending time in the countryside of the Apennines while staying in the monastery of Bobbio."¹¹⁴ He gives the impression that he was only staying at the monastery. This was before Bertulf's death, thus sometime in 638 or 639, and before Jonas became a missionary in the Merovingian kingdom. It might thus indicate that Jonas was already a

111. VC 2.25: 290.

112. See O'Hara 2015.

113. Wood 2001b, 39, for example, downplays Bobbio as a missionary center in comparison with Luxeuil's more wide-ranging activity. See also Gasparri forthcoming, who does not see Bobbio as a mission center.

114. *cum apud eos Apenninibus ruribus vegans in Ebobiensem cenobium morarer. VC, Epistula ad Waldebertum et Bobolenum*: 145.

missionary working in the valleys of the Apennines. If Jonas had missionary experience, this might further explain why he went to work with Bishop Amandus in the northeast of Merovingian Gaul. Jonas may have become involved with Amandus's mission through Bishop Acharius of Noyon-Tournai, who had been a Luxeuil monk and was a close associate of Amandus.¹¹⁵ A less indirect channel is also possible. Amandus twice visited Rome, and it is almost certain (given his Columbanian background) that he would have stopped at Bobbio which was enroute to Rome. Amandus could have recruited Jonas directly from Bobbio.

Jonas's missionary activity is a major feature of his monastic career and of his development as a hagiographer. The drudgery of missionary work and the recording of miracle stories were complementary. It was as a missionary that he wrote the VC, while the VV, concerning the first bishop of Arras, whose see was in the same area where Jonas worked as a missionary, looked back to the first attempts to Christianize the Franks at the time of Clovis (d. 511). Jonas's interest in evangelization is thus mirrored in his hagiography.

It has been argued that Jonas did his best to try to make Columbanus a more dynamic missionary figure than he actually was.¹¹⁶ Columbanus's views on evangelization were ambiguous.¹¹⁷ As an ascetic exile, the saint did not appear to have the concept of mission in the forefront of his mind, although he expressed an interest in it, and clearly his influence had a major impact.¹¹⁸ Some of his disciples were certainly imbued with a missionary zeal, and this was undoubtedly due, in part, to Columbanus's influence.¹¹⁹ The "penitential mentality" of Columbanus was, in essence, the expression of a greater sensitivity toward the fate of the soul, and in this Columbanus was truly a contemporary of Gregory the Great. It was a concern for the salvation of souls that led to the development of the penitentials and to a concept of universal mission at this time. The two developments were linked, and both found their fullest expression in the life and work of Amandus, who was born around the time of Columbanus's arrival in Gaul and who died in around 675.¹²⁰

115. De Vogüé 1988b, 20–21; Stancliffe 2001, 191.

116. See Wood 2001b, 31–39, on Jonas as a missionary; and Wood 2001a on missionaries working on the frontiers.

117. Columbanus notes that he wished to visit the heathen to preach the gospel to them, but when he learned that they were less than enthusiastic, he decided not to go to them. *Ep.* 4.5: 30.

118. The concepts of *peregrinatio* and evangelization were closely tied to each other. See Angenendt 1982, 63–66. Walker 1970b also stressed the missionary element in Columbanus's *peregrinatio*, while Fletcher 1997, 232, noted that "The ideal of pilgrimage was absolutely central to the missionary impulse of the early Middle Ages."

119. Riché 1981.

120. On the life and work of Amandus, see Fox 2014, 118–132; de Moreau 1949; Fletcher 1997, 147–154.

Amandus combined the Columbanian ideal of *peregrinatio pro Christo* with a Gregorian sense of mission and is seen as a key figure in the development of the concept of a universal mission to all peoples.¹²¹ This is apparent from his surviving will, written at his monastery at Elnone shortly before his death, which states: “No one is ignorant of how I have travelled far and wide through all provinces and nations for the love of Christ, to announce the word of God and administer baptism, and of how Divine Clemency has saved me from many dangers and has deigned to preserve me down to the present day.”¹²² The concepts of *peregrinatio* and evangelization are also the dominant features in the account of his life written at Elnone in the eighth century.¹²³

Although he was the most exceptional example, Amandus was part of a wider network of Columbanian figures who were active in missionary work during the seventh century.¹²⁴ Eustasius and the first abbot of Rebais, Agilus, were both involved in missionary expeditions to Bavaria and the establishment of a monastery at Weltenburg near Regensburg, the most eastern of the Columbanian foundations.¹²⁵ The Columbanian-influenced bishops Audoin/Dado of Rouen and Eligius of Noyon were also instrumental in the evangelization of the rural population in their dioceses.¹²⁶ The *Vita Eligii episcopi Noviomagensis*, written by Eligius’s friend and fellow bishop Audoin/Dado, describes how the bishop of Noyon was appointed to his see, which included the territory in which Jonas worked, “because the inhabitants were still caught in the errors of the Gentiles. Given over to vain superstition, they were wild peasants who could in no way comprehend the word of salvation.”¹²⁷

121. Fritze 1969.

122. *Proinde omnibus non habetur incognitum, qualiter nos longe lateque per universas provincias seu gentes propter amorem Christi seu verbo Dei adnuntiare vel baptismum tradere discursum habuimus, et nos de multis periculis pietas Dei eripuit et usque tempore isto perducere dignatus est. Testamentum Amandi*: 484. The will is translated in Hillgarth 1986, 149.

123. *Vita Amandi I*. The *Vita* is also translated in Hillgarth 1986, 139–148. See de Moreau 1949. There is some difficulty with the dating of the *Vita*; see Wood 2001b, 40–42. Despite its probable eighth-century date, Wood 2001b, 42, sees it as providing “a plausible image of a Merovingian missionary of the middle of the seventh century.”

124. Fritze 1969, 84–96, with the chart at 87, termed this network “Die nordfränkische Missionarsgruppe columbanischer Prägung” and has illustrated it with an elaborate chart showing the principal figures linked by a series of bold and dotted arrows to show their connection and influence.

125. Jonas mentions Eustasius’s mission and also Agrestius’s failed mission to the Bavarians. VC 2.8: 244; 2.9: 246. The missionary efforts of Eustasius and Agilus are furthermore outlined in the ninth-century *Vita Agili abbatis Resbacensis*. Fletcher 1997, 143, comments that Weltenburg, on the borders of Christendom, “performed some of the functions of a mission station.” On Weltenburg, see also Fox 2014, 35, 76.

126. Fouracre 1979.

127. *quod incolae eiusdem regionis magna adhuc ex parte gentilitatis errore detinebantur et vanis superstitionibus satis dediti errant, quique velut agrestes ferae nullius uspiam salutare verbum recipere poterant. Vita Eligii episcopi Noviomagensis*, 2.2: 695. Translation by McNamara, 152.

Jonas is also a representative of this group. He mentions briefly in the letter of dedication about being asked to write the *Vita* and about his experiences as a missionary:

I recall that about three years ago, while I was spending time in the countryside of the Apennines while staying in the monastery of Bobbio, I promised I would do my best to give a written account of the deeds of the beloved father Columbanus at the supportive urging of the brothers and at the bidding of the blessed abbot Bertulf. . . . For, if I had not judged myself entirely unworthy for this work, I would have started trying to compile it at once, although that would have been a rash attempt, even though for three years the Scarpe conveyed me along the shores of the Ocean in a boat, the Scheldt often soaked me while I cut a path through its gentle passages in a skiff, and the humid fen of the Elnone made my feet wet as I assisted the venerable bishop Amandus, who had been appointed to these regions in order to cut down the long-established errors of the Sicambrians with the blade of the Gospel.¹²⁸

As the letter is addressed in part to the new abbot of Bobbio, Bobolenus, who succeeded Bertulf in 639, Jonas must have been writing no later than 642. It means that for those intervening three years, during which the VC was written, Jonas was working as a missionary with Amandus.¹²⁹ This is the only mention Jonas makes of his own missionary activity, and he does not go into further detail about it, although from this account, he seems to have traveled throughout the region. It is most likely that during this period, Jonas was based at the recently founded monastery at Elnone (indeed, he mentions the marsh there), which in the *Vita Amandi I* is described as “a fit place for

128. *Memini me ante hoc ferme triennium, fratrum conibentia flagitante vel beati Bertulfi abbatis imperio iubente, cum apud eos Appenninis ruribus vagans in Ebobiensem cenobium morarer, fuisse pollicitum, ut almi patris Columbani meo studerem stilo texere gesta. . . . Si enim me in hoc opere nequaquam indignum iudicasset, olim iam ad ea texenda temerario quamvis conatu adgressus fuisset, quamquam me et per triennium Oceani per ora vehit et Scarbea lintris abacta ascoque Scaldeus molles secando vias madefacit saepe et lenta palus Elnonis plantas ob venerabilis Amandi pontificis ferendum suffragium, qui his constitutus in locis veteris Sicamborum errores euangelico mucrone coeret. VC, Epistula ad Waldebertum et Bobolenum: 145–146.*

129. This conclusion was also reached by Zironi 2004, 28, although he suggests that while the first part concerning Columbanus reflects the Classical influences (“un’influenza diretta della cultura classica”) Jonas would have obtained from Bobbio manuscripts, the second part, concerning the saint’s disciples, shows much less influence of Classical authors and that, therefore, this section was most likely written while Jonas was a missionary. While we cannot ascribe Jonas’s knowledge of the classics to his monastic formation at Bobbio, the implication from Jonas’s letter to the abbots is that the work was written in three years and that it was during those three years that he was working as a missionary.

preaching.”¹³⁰ The hagiographer of Amandus also mentions that many of the monks who worked for Amandus there “we have seen later become abbots or leading men,”¹³¹ as was indeed true for Jonas.

The area in which Jonas worked was another region where mission and Frankish imperialism went hand in hand.¹³² One of Amandus’s most spectacular miracles, for example, was the resurrection of a hanged man in Flanders who had been executed under the orders of a Frankish count and an assembly of Franks.¹³³ Amandus was initially made a bishop and given license to preach in Flanders by King Dagobert I. The bishop was able to draw on secular backing when he obtained letters from the king stating that those who did not accept voluntary baptism would be compelled by the secular power to do so.¹³⁴ As Stefan Esders has made clear, Amandus’s work both in Slavic territory and in Flanders should be seen in the context of a treaty concluded between Dagobert and the Byzantine emperor Heraclius in 629, whereby the Franks pursued an imperial policy of forced conversion of pagans and Jews.¹³⁵ In the case of northern Gaul, we are dealing with peoples who had once been Christian but who had apostatized over time. The danger of apostasy to the Christian welfare of the kingdom put the onus on the Christian monarch to intervene and gave him the right to extend Church policy and legislation in the region.¹³⁶ Amandus, however, does not seem to have resorted to military force, even though, the hagiographer notes, women and peasants often threw him into the river Scheldt. The *Vita Amandi I*, although an eighth-century source, provides vignettes of the remarkable figure of Amandus and some sense of the difficulties Jonas may have encountered in the northeast, where Frankish imperial and ecclesiastic structures worked in tandem to extend their authority in this region. Having grown up in the Byzantine enclave of Susa and with some pastoral experience in Bobbio, Jonas may have been considered an ideal coworker for Amandus and the Franks in implementing a strategy that seems to have been initiated by Byzantine imperial policy.

130. *locum praedicationis aptum*. *Vita Amandi I* 22: 445; English translation in Hillgarth 1986, 146.

131. *ex eisdem fratribus plures postea abbates vel honorificos vidimus viros*. *Vita Amandi I* 22: 445; English translation in Hillgarth 1986, 146.

132. On this region of northern Merovingian Gaul and the political and social context, see Mériaux 2002, 2006a; Esders 2016.

133. *Vita Amandi I* 14: 438–439.

134. *Vita Amandi I* 13: 437.

135. See Esders 2016. I am very grateful to Stefan Esders for sending me a copy of his article prior to publication.

136. Esders 2016.

ABBOT OF MARCHIENNES-HAMAGE AND
THE *REGULA CUIUSDAM AD VIRGINES*

Jonas is styled “abbot” in the prologue to his *VJ*.¹³⁷ Although it provides valuable information about Jonas, it is unlikely that he wrote the prologue. The two references to Jonas in the third person have an impersonal tone, and it is more likely that it was written by a member of the Réomé community to explain how the work came to be written and by whom. It nevertheless reveals that by 659, Jonas was an abbot, probably of a northern foundation (as he was traveling south to Chalon), and had contact with kings and queens. As with Venantius Fortunatus before him, literary accomplishment and ecclesiastical advancement had come together for this foreigner in Merovingian Gaul.¹³⁸

In the mid-eleventh century, the hagiographer of the *Vita Walarici abbatis Leuconaensis* also preserved the memory of Jonas as an abbot. This late Life concerned a Frankish monk and monastic founder who had been trained at Luxeuil under Columbanus and Eustasius. It provides evidence for the reading of the *VC* in a northern French foundation in the eleventh century and gives an enthusiastic blurb for the work. It also mentions Jonas as an abbot and his skills as a writer. The hagiographer recommended the *VC* to his readers and referred to its author as “Abbot Jonas, a great man, full of eloquence and accomplished in writing” (*Ionas abba, vir magnus, eloquentiae plenus et dictandi peritus*).¹³⁹ There is also evidence from two important early manuscripts that attests to Jonas’s status as an abbot. At the beginning of the oldest manuscript, St Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, 553, written at St Gallen by eight scribes in a fine Caroline of the first half of the ninth century, Jonas’s preface to the *VC* is preceded by a note in majuscule script: *Incipit Praefatio super librum qui de vita atque virtutibus sancti Columbani abbatis a Iona quondam preceptore editus est*.¹⁴⁰ The reference here to Jonas as a *quondam praeceptor* is interesting, as it indicates that Jonas was later remembered at St Gallen not just as a writer but also as someone of authority. *Praeceptor* in Classical usage means a teacher or instructor, but in medieval Latin, it can also mean a manager of a monastery.¹⁴¹ Another, later manuscript, produced at Bobbio in the eleventh century, also preserved the memory of Jonas as an abbot. Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale, F. III. 15, has, at the beginning of Jonas’s letter to the abbots that prefaces the *Vita*, a decorated initial containing the figure of a mitred Jonas with abbatial staff, above which

137. *VJ* prologue: 326.

138. On Venantius Fortunatus, see George 1992; Roberts 2009.

139. *Vita Walarici abbatis Leuconaensis* 6: 163.

140. St Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, 553, fol. 2v.

141. See Niermeyer and Van de Kieft 2002, vol. 2, 1079.

is written in rubrics: *Incipit prologus Ione abbatis in Vita Sancti Columbani*.¹⁴² Jonas refers to himself as *Jonas peccator*,¹⁴³ which does not rule out the possibility that he was an abbot when he wrote the VC. Columbanus, for example, although an abbot, referred to himself as *peccator* in his letters.¹⁴⁴

Benedictine scholar Jean Mabillon (1632–1707) first identified Jonas with a certain Abbot Jonatus of Marchiennes, a monastery in the same area where we know Jonas was active.¹⁴⁵ Marchiennes was founded around 640 by Amandus, probably at the same time as his monastery of nearby Elnone (now Saint-Amand-les-Eaux), which was built on twenty-five thousand hectares of fiscal land donated by King Dagobert I.¹⁴⁶ Establishing monasteries was an important component of pastoral activity in the countryside and went hand in hand with the expansion of Frankish ecclesiastical and secular authorities in this region of the northeast.¹⁴⁷ Marchiennes was originally established as a male community, but Jonas introduced a female community, perhaps to accommodate the entry of the landowner's widow, Rictrude, and her children into the monastic life. According to the early-tenth-century *Vita Rictrudis*, Rictrude's husband, Adalbald, had been assassinated by members of Rictrude's Gascon family, who had been opposed to the marriage.¹⁴⁸ The likeliest date for Adalbald's murder was in 636, when Dagobert I sent a Frankish army into Gascony to suppress a Gascon revolt.¹⁴⁹ The six thousand hectares of land that made up the demesnes of the communities of Marchiennes and Hamage belonged to Adalbald's patrimony.¹⁵⁰ The establishment of the communities may have been a way for Adalbald's widow and family to maintain control over the land following the death of her husband, especially as Dagobert I wanted to marry off the widow to one of his courtiers.¹⁵¹ Hamage was probably founded around the same time as Marchiennes by Adalbald's grandmother, Gertrude. Eusebia, Rictrude's daughter, became abbess of Hamage at the age of twelve sometime in the mid-640s, following the death of the first abbess, Gertrude.¹⁵² Jonas may have written

142. Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale, F. III. 15, fol. 21r. Krusch dated this manuscript to the eleventh century, but Cipolla dated it to the end of the tenth or beginning of the eleventh century. See Cipolla 1907, 166–167.

143. VC, *Epistula ad Waldebertum et Bobolenum*: 144.

144. See, e.g., *Ep.* 2.1: 12.

145. Mabillon 1677, vol. 1, lxxix.

146. Ugé 2005, 97–98; Fox 2014, 123.

147. Mériaux 2006b; van Egmond 2000, 38.

148. *Vita Rictrudis* 11: 493.

149. Fredegar 4.78; noted by McNamara, Whatley, Halborg 1992, 204 n. 33.

150. Louis 2014, 442.

151. See Ugé 2005, 101.

152. Ugé 2005, 108.

his Rule for nuns around this time, as there is a long discourse on how the abbess should behave and how family members should not be given preferential treatment within the community.¹⁵³ Jonas may well have had reservations about how Rictrude's extended noble family sought to exercise influence over the new communities; in the VC, he consistently seeks to downplay the role of secular potentates in the foundation of Columbanian communities. To accommodate Rictrude and her family's entry into religious life, Jonas formed a double community of monks and nuns, and he may have written the *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines* in consultation with Rictrude around this time to regulate the new community of Marchiennes.

If Jonas was indeed the abbot of Marchiennes, then the excavations of its sister house at Hamage may provide new material when read together with the written sources. Hamage has been the subject of extensive excavations carried out by Étienne Louis since the 1990s.¹⁵⁴ They provide a rare opportunity to compare the archaeological evidence with the description of the monastic community found in the *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines*. The current understanding of the site is that the first phase of the community from the middle of the seventh century encompassed an enclosed space demarcated by a deep ditch and a palisade with several little cells for the nuns within the enclosure. A church dedicated to Saint Peter stood just outside the enclosure where the first inhumations are found. This adequately served the liturgical needs of the community, where male priests could say Mass without having to enter the enclosure. A large timber-framed building, which is still unclear, may also have been found within the enclosure, later developed in the eighth century as a communal building. Also in the eighth century, a stone church dedicated to Saint Mary was built within the enclosure. It is possible that there was an earlier (perhaps wooden) oratory within the monastic compound that served the liturgical needs of the community without members having to leave the enclosure. The dedication of the monastic church to Peter and Mary is also found in Burgundofara's testament for Faremoutiers, drawn up in 634 around the same time that Jonas was at the convent for the memorial Mass of one of the nuns who had recently died there.¹⁵⁵ The Rule may also have been written with Faremoutiers in mind, as it stipulates that the nuns were to make confession three times a day, a practice that Jonas also mentions in the

153. See *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines* chapters 1, 23.

154. For the state of the current research, see Louis 2014; Louis and Blondiaux 2009, with further references.

155. Guérout 1965, 818, 819; VC 2.12.

Faremoutiers chapters of the VC.¹⁵⁶ Two churches—one inside and one outside the enclosure—may have existed at Hamage, although the stone church of Saint Mary only becomes visible archaeologically in the eighth-century phase. While the *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines* may have been primarily written for Rictrude's community at Marchiennes (which has not been excavated), many spatial features of the Rule appear in the archaeological record of Hamage, which may have mirrored the layout of Marchiennes.

The author of the Rule conceptualized the monastery in two distinct zones that were to be separated. Access to the outside was to be tightly restricted by a gate and porters. The inner enclosure, or *septa*, was reserved solely for the female community, while the area outside was reserved for guests and the laity, as was the case in Columbanus's Luxeuil, according to Jonas.¹⁵⁷ The author notes that "Within the *septa* or gates of the monastery they must not allow any man or woman to eat or drink, but they should serve all who arrive outside in the guesthouse, just as their dignity requires. . . . But we decree that only those who have pledged to God a holy way of life and who are bound in the unity of obedience under one rule may eat and drink inside."¹⁵⁸ The two separate churches that we find in the archaeological record—one inside and one outside the enclosure—also appear in the Rule. The author notes that those nuns who are doing penance for serious offenses are not allowed to stand in the church with the rest of the community but are to be separated in another church.¹⁵⁹ Individual cells are also mentioned, which were used for the infirm, novices, the senile, and penitents, but most of the nuns were to sleep in one dormitory, two to a bed, and fully clothed.¹⁶⁰ This accords with the large rectangular dormitory-type building from the second half of the seventh century that has been discovered at Hamage. Although the Rule has now been attributed to Jonas, the place for which it was written has not been conclusively established. A number of possibilities have been suggested—such as the female community of Faremoutiers near Paris—but not Hamage.¹⁶¹ There are undoubted similarities between the archaeology of Hamage and the monastic space as set out by the author of the *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines*.

156. *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines* 6; VC 2.19.

157. VC 1.19.

158. *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines* 3.

159. *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines* 6.

160. *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines* 14.

161. See *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines* and discussion in Diem's forthcoming edition.

JONATUS OR JONAS?

If the *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines* was written for the female community of Marchiennes-Hamage by Jonas, what evidence is there that Jonas became abbot of Marchiennes? The notion of two men named Jonas and Jonatus who both worked with Amandus and who both became abbots in the same area is unlikely. A series of scholars since Mabillon have either accepted or rejected his hypothesis.¹⁶² In 1988, an Italian literary scholar, Ileana Pagani, concluded that the hagiographer and the abbot of Marchiennes were two separate individuals.¹⁶³ Her conclusion rested on the seeming disparities between how both men were represented in the medieval literary tradition. The sources from the tenth century and later that mention Jonatus do not refer to him as a writer, while the earlier sources that refer to Jonas all mention him in the context of his authorship of the VC. Jonatus, on the other hand, was lauded as a saint, an epithet that was never applied to the hagiographer Jonas. It was Jonas's learning and skill as a writer that were praised by the early hagiographers who mentioned him, not his sanctity. However, Pagani's arguments for two individuals are not convincing.

The group of texts that mention Jonatus were all local products, written either at Marchiennes or at Saint-Amand (Elnone) between the early tenth and thirteenth centuries. The earliest sources that mention him are a series of saints' Lives written by Hucbald, a monk and teacher at Saint-Amand. In the three works that mention the abbot of Marchiennes—the *Vita Rictrudis*, the *Vita Amati episcopi Sidunensis*, and the *Vita Ionati*, all written during the first half of the tenth century—Jonatus is represented as a disciple of Amandus who had been given charge of the new foundation by the bishop and was responsible for making it into a double community.¹⁶⁴ When we consider the lengthy section on the Faremoutiers nuns in the VC, Book 2, chapters 11–22, which may often appear incongruous as the largest section of Book 2, Jonas's decision to include a section about a female community makes perfect sense if he was an abbot of a double community such as Marchiennes-Hamage.

Hucbald's hagiography, which reestablished a communal tradition at Marchiennes following Viking attacks in the late ninth century, was supplemented by new writings by members of the community. A monk of Saint-Amand put Hucbald's *Vita Rictrudis* into verse toward the end of the tenth century, while in the twelfth century, Galbert of Marchiennes wrote the *Miracula Ionati*.¹⁶⁵ These and other hagiographical works were supplemented from the

162. On this scholarly debate, see Pagani 1988.

163. "personaggi radicalmente differenti nella tradizione medievale." Pagani 1988, 85.

164. On these sources, see Pagani 1988, 46–55.

165. Pagani 1988, 55.

twelfth century by the production of chronicles at both Marchiennes and Saint-Amand in which Jonatus is briefly mentioned. The chroniclers, however, faced the same problems as Hucbald had faced when it came to the early history of the communities, as the original library and documents had been destroyed by the Vikings.¹⁶⁶ Hucbald's scant information is, however, added to with regard to chronology. From the *Annals of Marchiennes*, Jonatus appears as the first abbot under the year 641.¹⁶⁷ The *Chronicle of Marchiennes* adds that not long after this, he added a female community to the monastery to accommodate the entry of Rictrude and her daughters into the religious life.¹⁶⁸ The chronicle further notes that Jonatus was a *vir fidelis et simplex* who was formed through the sacred learning of Bishop Amandus.

The formation of a double community where the female proportion of members was soon dominant was in essence a refoundation.¹⁶⁹ One reason we know so little about the first abbot may have been the prominence of Rictrude, who, as the founder and abbess of the community, overshadowed her male colleague in the hagiographical record. The wealth brought to the monastery by Rictrude led to the construction of a new church, which, like the majority of Columbanian foundations, was dedicated to Saint Peter and was consecrated by Amandus and Autbert, bishop of Cambrai-Arras.¹⁷⁰ Although the tradition that Autbert had been a monk of Luxeuil is admittedly very late (seventeenth century) and uncertain,¹⁷¹ it is not unlikely, given the Luxeuil background of many of his episcopal contemporaries in the northern dioceses.¹⁷² There were links between Marchiennes and Arras, only forty-four kilometers away. Bishop Autbert, who was extremely active in promoting monasticism in his diocese,¹⁷³ officiated at the consecration of the church at Marchiennes, even though the monastery, where Jonas appears to have been abbot, was in the diocese of Verdun. Autbert also had links with Amandus and was involved with Bishop Eligius of Noyon-Tournai in the translation of the relics of the Irish saint Fursey to Péronne in 654.¹⁷⁴ The presence of Autbert at Marchiennes and his links to Amandus lend further weight to Jonatus's identification with Jonas. As the bishop of Arras, it was likely Autbert who commissioned Jonas to write the *Vita*

166. Pagani 1988, 57. Smith 1994, 518, noted that "Hucbald shared the dislocations and temporary exiles forced on the community by the Vikings."

167. *Annales Marchianenses*: 610.

168. *Chronicon Marchianense*: 456. See also *Chronica brevis de fundatione et abbatibus Elmonensibus*.

169. Pagani 1988, 59.

170. Pagani 1988, 60.

171. See Mériaux 2006a, 61.

172. On Autbert as a quondam monk of Luxeuil, see Wood 1994c, 188; Prinz 1965, 179.

173. Dierkens 1985, 91–95, 304, 305.

174. Mériaux 2006a, 61, 74.

Vedastis concerning the first bishop of Arras and contemporary of Clovis at the turn of the sixth century.

The later chronicle sources do not provide new information on Jonatus apart from 641 as the year in which he became abbot.¹⁷⁵ The ephemeral outline sketched by Hucbald remains the same. Yet this is important, as it may indicate that Jonas became an abbot during the time he was writing the VC. By becoming abbot and through his close relationship to Bishop Amandus, Jonas may have felt confident about writing Book 2. This appears to have been an independent decision, as it is unlikely that Book 2 was part of the initial Bobbio commission. The independence of the abbatial office may have played a role in Jonas's decision to write what was, in effect, an appendix to the original *Vita*. Book 2 is often dismissed because of its unusual structure and because it does not seem as interesting as Book 1 on Columbanus, but it is just as important (if not more so) than Book 1. Jonas wrote Book 2 to critique the changes in Columbanian monasticism while chronicling its successes. He also provided an edificatory text for the male and female communities at Marchiennes. I see this as the most obvious explanation for the Faremoutiers chapters; they must have been written with a double community in mind.

While the memory of Jonatus/Jonas had to be resurrected by the Marchiennes community from the tenth century onward, the abbot also appeared in a number of sources written at Elnone, the neighboring monastery only some fourteen kilometers away. Although the abbot is not mentioned in the earliest accounts dealing with Amandus, he is noted in a series of documents dating from the twelfth century.¹⁷⁶ He appears as the third abbot of Elnone after Amandus and Ursus. He is designated as such in the *Series abbatum S. Amandi Elnonensis*.¹⁷⁷ Another source, also from the late twelfth century, expands on this. It notes that when Amandus was appointed to the see of Maastricht, he ordained his disciple, Ursus, who was abbot for some time until his death. Then Amandus appointed Jonatus as his successor. Jonatus is lauded as the *alumnus* of Amandus, and the source adds that when the bishop founded Marchiennes, Jonatus became its first abbot. It is interesting that here, in this case, the abbot's learning was alluded to.¹⁷⁸ The author further notes that when Amandus went on pilgrimage to Rome for the third time, Jonas was given the charge of Elnone and Marchiennes to

175. Pagani 1988, 61.

176. Pagani 1988, 62–63.

177. *Series abbatum S. Amandi Elnonensis*: 386.

178. Pagani 1988, 63, anticipating one argument against her case that Jonatus was never identified as an author and so should not be identified with Jonas, states that this *praeclara scientia* probably alludes to a monastic and spiritual knowledge, although why this should not include a literary knowledge I do not know.

rule during the bishop's absence. When Amandus returned, Jonatus lived at Marchiennes for some time after Amandus's death in 675.¹⁷⁹ Pagani also noted that the local cult to Jonatus survived into the early modern period; the dates of his death (August 1) and the translation of his relics (April 8) were recorded in liturgical sources from Marchiennes.¹⁸⁰

Pagani has seen the absence of any reference to Jonatus as a writer or to Jonas as a saint as indicating that these were two separate individuals. The similarities in name she also dismisses as inconclusive evidence. When Hucbald wrote in the early tenth century, the tradition at Marchiennes had been disrupted, as he himself lamented. He only decided to write his accounts after some fragmentary sources were presented to him and trustworthy witnesses swore to the veracity of the documentary sources that had been destroyed during the Viking attacks. While it is easy to dismiss this as fanciful hagiographical rhetoric, the fact that the memory of someone called Jonatus had been transmitted and that he was known to be the first abbot, but not the knowledge that he was the famous biographer of Columbanus, actually seems more plausible. If the Marchiennes community had wanted to create an invented tradition, they would have associated their first abbot with the hagiographer of the VC. The fact that they did not do this speaks for the veracity of the tradition. During those three hundred years, it is unsurprising that Jonas's name was altered slightly or that his reputation as an author faded from memory. It was, after all, Jonas's role as abbot that mattered for the Marchiennes community. And in the *Poeticum Marcianensis cenobii* preserved in a twelfth-century manuscript (Douai, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 850, fol. 124r) and written around 1120, we find the name of Jonas, not Jonatus, as the first abbot.¹⁸¹ Pagani conveniently noted this important piece of evidence in a footnote to her article.¹⁸² Mabillon's original claim that Jonatus and Jonas were the same person appears to be more convincing than Pagani's contrary thesis.¹⁸³ Jonas, Italian monk of Bobbio, hagiographer of Columbanus, and author of the *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines*, may well have ended his days as Jonas of Marchiennes, abbot and saint.

179. Pagani 1988, 63

180. Pagani 1988, 63–64.

181. *In eodem vero loco primum sexus masculini personis ad serviendum delegatis, pastor vigilantissimus et procurator interius exteriusque vir fidelis et simplex Jonas donatus est eis. Qui beati Amandi pontificis discipulorum unus ejus sacra eruditionis admodum informatus ad hoc officium idoneus inventus est.* *L'Histoire-Polyptyque de l'Abbaye de Marchiennes* 6: 70.

182. Pagani 1988, 60 n. 42.

183. The identification is one that a more recent Benedictine scholar also considered likely: de Vogüé 1988b, 22.

Stilo Texere Gesta: *Jonas the Hagiographer*

JONAS WROTE WITHIN A GENRE OF CHRISTIAN LITERATURE THAT WAS well established by the seventh century. There was a canon of Late Antique hagiography—Athanasius’s *Life of Antony*; Jerome’s *Life of Paul*, *Life of Hilarion*, and *Life of Malchus*; Sulpicius Severus’s *Life of Martin* and his *Dialogues*—which Jonas knew and which he explicitly mentions as exemplars.¹ While arguably the best known of seventh-century hagiographers writing in Merovingian Gaul, Jonas was working within a rich and diverse tradition of Merovingian hagiography. In addition to the substantial sixth-century works written by Venantius Fortunatus and his contemporary Gregory of Tours (who wrote six collections of miracle stories and saints’ Lives), there are some seventy works of hagiography from Gaul prior to the seventh century.² From 600 to 750, there are at least twenty-one works of hagiography, while more and more texts that were previously thought to be Carolingian are now being redated to the Merovingian period.³ Jonas was far from writing in a hagiographical vacuum. He was, in fact, at the forefront of a dynamic social experiment whereby Merovingian hagiographers increasingly sought to shape and influence the social reality of the Merovingian kingdom through the medium of hagiography. The ways in which hagiographers such as Jonas tried to influence and direct social discourse in the kingdom have been brilliantly explored by Jamie Kreiner, who has also noted that “hagiography was a major part of Merovingian media culture.”⁴ Due to the sheer size of Merovingian Gaul, most of this hagiography was regional and local, reflecting the diversity of religious experiences and traditions. Wolfert van Egmond has drawn attention to the rich vein of hagiography written in Auxerre around the time of Bishop Aunacharius (561/573–605/614), while hagiography continued to be produced for communities in the *civitates* of Langres, Cambrai, Poitiers, Arles, and Vienne, which shows that the writing of hagiography had not died with Gregory of Tours.⁵

1. VC 1.1. See Stancliffe 2001, 199.

2. Heinzelmann 2010; on Gregory of Tours and his hagiography, see Heinzelmann 2001; Kitchen 2016.

3. Van Uytenghe 2000; Heinzelmann 2010.

4. Kreiner 2014b, forthcoming.

5. Van Egmond 2006.

While Jonas wrote from a monastic perspective rooted in the Columbanian tradition, his *VJ* and *VV* show how aware he was of other monastic and episcopal traditions within Gaul. Despite the flourishing of hagiographical writing at this time in Gaul, Jonas does not appear to have been much influenced by it. Hardly any trace of contemporary works of Merovingian hagiography can be found in Jonas's writing, with the exception of the *Passion of Desiderius of Vienne*, which was the work of a near-contemporary Visigothic king and which I discuss later. Jonas is also very elusive when it comes to tracing the textual influence of other Late Antique works of hagiography. While he wrote within the established tradition of Late Antique hagiography, he exercised considerable skill and originality in the way he used this tradition. Perhaps the most puzzling aspect of this is the absence of any explicit mention of Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*, completed in 594. A number of scholars have shown clearly that Jonas knew the *Dialogues*, which provides important evidence for the early reception of this Gregorian work, despite attempts to question the authenticity of Gregory's authorship.⁶ Particularly striking is the absence of any reference to the enigmatic Italian holy man and subject of Gregory's Book 2, Benedict of Nursia. This is also the case in Adomnán's *Life of Columba*, which uses the words of Gregory's *Dialogues* on Benedict but without naming either Gregory or Benedict.⁷

Jonas was certainly aware of Benedict and the *RB*, which had been introduced into the Columbanian communities probably following the Synod of Mâcon in 626/627 and which he used in the *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines* in addition to the Rules attributed to Columbanus. Perhaps the silence is best seen as part of a strategy to suggest that Columbanian monasticism was unchanging and was at no point in need of reform, which would implicitly suggest that the charges leveled by Agrestius, or indeed by any other critics, were unfounded. While Jonas's account of the Agrestius affair in chapters 9 and 10 of Book 2 are the longest chapters of the entire *VC*, he remains silent about any subsequent reform. Since one of Jonas's aims in the *Vita* was to vindicate Columbanus's reputation as an orthodox saint and to defend his version of the holy man's monastic practices, he may have feared that Benedict and his Rule were competing

6. See de Vogüé 1988c; Vogeler 1988; O'Hara 2009a. The argument of Clark 1987 that the *Dialogues* were not the work of Gregory the Great has generally not been accepted. *VC* 1.20 resembles *Dialogues* 1.2, 4. Jonas, however, developed on Gregory's account, as de Vogüé notes, "Jonas dit en deux phrases ce que Grégoire dit en une. Il détaille: les pieds des soldats touchent ceux de Colomban, leurs vêtements frôlent les siens, tandis que le saint les regarde avec amusement. L'hagiographe colombanien semble se souvenir du sobre récit des *Dialogues* et le développer" (de Vogüé 1988a, 81). The incident of the disobedient fox in *VC* 2.25 recalls *Dialogues* 1.9, 18.

7. I owe this observation to Thomas Charles-Edwards.

influences that would overshadow and eclipse the authority of Columbanus and his monastic tradition within his own communities—a legitimate fear, as it turned out.

Jonas and his compatriot Venantius Fortunatus, who was active in Gaul in the later sixth century, can be seen as among the first professional hagiographers of the Early Middle Ages.⁸ Venantius was an outsider in Merovingian Gaul who sought patronage from Merovingian royalty and the Gallic bishops. Most of his hagiography was written in response to requests from bishops and reflected the Gallic bishops' image of themselves and their status.⁹ Although Jonas wrote a century later in a very different "emotional community" and sphere of patronage, both he and Venantius wrote on commission, and both had successful literary careers that were translated into Church office. Venantius became bishop of Poitiers, while Jonas likely became abbot of Marchiennes. Like Venantius, Jonas did not initiate the projects, but it appears that in each case he was commissioned by others to write works of hagiography.

Jonas's lengthy letter to the abbots that prefaces his VC and the prefaces that he wrote for the VJ and the VV provide his most explicit statements of the motivations for his writing. He says in each preface that he wrote his texts with two main purposes in mind. The first was commemorative, the second didactic. Jonas stressed the commemorative function at the beginning of each work. In his letter to the abbots, he characterizes the VC as the *gesta* of the founder saint. Isidore of Seville famously defined history as *rerum gestarum narratio*, and the use of the term *gesta* has particular historical and legal connotations above those of exclusively sacred literature.¹⁰ The use of the term was meant to convey a sense of accurate record-keeping and associations with the *gesta municipalia*, the public archives where copies of legal transactions were kept. Jonas had probably been in charge of the Bobbio archives, and his use of the phrase *texere gesta* ("to weave together the deeds of the saints") and similar phrases by subsequent Merovingian hagiographers who had read Jonas signaled that their work was accurate and trustworthy.¹¹ Jonas's use of the term reflects a legal and historical consciousness and that he conceived of the VC as a kind of *gesta abbatum*.¹² The Carolingian genres of the *gesta episcoporum* and the *gesta abbatum*, which were modeled on the short biographies of the popes in the Roman sixth-century *Liber pontificalis*, did not become common until the eighth and ninth centuries.

8. On the career and work of Venantius, see Coates 2000; George 1992; Roberts 2009, with further bibliography.

9. Coates 2000, 1113–1114.

10. See *gesta* in *Lexikon des Mittelalters* 4: 1404–1406.

11. Kreiner 2014b, 52–53.

12. In his 1905 edition of the VC, Krusch also remarks on Jonas's use of the term; see VC 1.1: 152 n. 3.

These sources were historical works organized chronologically according to the succession of the bishops or abbots from the origins of the church or monastery up to the time of the author.¹³ These texts were intended to show the inherent sanctity of the episcopal or abbatial line of succession and were geared toward the present. Given the unusual structure of the VC, which does not solely focus on one saint but continues the story of Columbanus's successors as abbots as well as the female religious community of Faremoutiers—whose abbess, Burgundofara, Columbanus blessed as a child—Jonas's work shares many of these features.

In contrast with earlier models that Jonas could have drawn from, such as Gregory of Tours's sixth-century *Liber vitae patrum* or Theodoret of Cyrus's fifth-century *Religious History*, which are concerned with a series of individual holy men, Jonas's work considers not just an individual holy man but also his successors and communities. Bede's *History of the Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow* from the early eighth century also seems to fit this model, as most of the text concerns Benedict Biscop before considering his successors as abbots.¹⁴ The authors of these *gesta episcoporum/abbatum* put great importance on eye-witness and oral accounts in verifying their information. This is also evident in Jonas, where he states that his work contained nothing false, only reliable information obtained from eyewitness accounts:

I promised I would do my best to give a written account of the deeds [*gesta*] of the beloved father Columbanus at the supportive urging of the brothers and at the bidding of the blessed abbot Bertulf. I have done this especially because there are so many among you still living who were there at the time and saw what he accomplished, and who give us, not a second-hand, but an eye-witness account. Moreover, I also learnt things from the venerable men, Athala and Eustasius. . . . We have included those things, therefore, which (according to reliable authorities) we have found to have taken place, and which we thought it negligent to disregard. And many things have been omitted which we simply do not remember completely, and we thought it entirely inadvisable to record them (only) partially.¹⁵

13. Sot 1981, 21.

14. It is very likely that Bede knew the VC, given his description of Faremoutiers and Earcongota's beatific death in *Historia ecclesiastica* 3.8, which has close similarities to Jonas's descriptions of the deaths of Faremoutiers nuns. See Wood 1982, 68–69.

15. *fuisse pollicitum, ut almi patris Columbani meo studerem stilo texere gesta; praesertim cum hii qui eo fuerunt in tempore et poenes ipsum patrata viderunt quam plurimi vos suprestis sint, qui nobis non audita sed visa narrent, vel quae etiam nos per venerabiles viros Athalam et Eustasium didicimus. . . . Inservimus ergo illa quae veris assertionibus experti sumus fuisse patrata et praetermittere neglegentiae deputavimus, multoque praetermissa, quae ex totum nequaquam meminimus et pro parte scribere nullatenus ratum duximus.* VC, *Epistula ad Waldebertum et Bobolenum*: 145, 147 (O'Hara and Wood 2017, 85–86, 88).

In his preface to the VC, Jonas moreover characterizes saints' Lives as "monuments of powerful deeds" (*virtutum monumenta*) and says that he was undertaking "to construct with elaborate care the deeds [*gesta*] of our father Columbanus which shine so brightly in our age."¹⁶

The motivation to commemorate past saintly deeds is reiterated in Jonas's other works. He notes in the VV: "we have decided to commend to posterity the memory of the venerable man, Vedast, bishop of the city of Arras: we attempt to trace in words his origins, and indeed the course of his life, and the nature of his death."¹⁷ In the preface to the VJ, Jonas again refers to a *gesta religiosa*.¹⁸

This sense of sacred Christian history that Jonas alludes to in his prefaces is further underlined in his remarkable poem, full of Classical allusions, placed at the end of Book 1 of the VC.¹⁹ Here he proclaims that the great deeds of antiquity are incomparable to those of the saints. Not even those epic tales related by Homer or Virgil were equal to those of Columbanus: "They did nothing of similar worth in their deeds, Smyranean Homer and Mantuan Maro."²⁰ The *gesta* of the saints has eclipsed the *gesta* of antiquity. Such historical hyperbole reflects Jonas's conviction that saints' Lives were indeed records of sacred history.

Yet equally important to Jonas was his belief that these works should serve as contemporary media of edification. The terms Jonas uses repeatedly to express this didactic function are *exemplum* and *supplimentum*.²¹ In the preface to the VC, he wrote that hagiographers "have preserved the glowing life of the leading saints and fathers of monks" so that their "nourishing examples" might influence future generations.²² Those who strove to imitate the saints and preserve their memory would receive salvation.²³ His texts were not only records of the deeds of holy men but also meditative reflections that attempted to inspire and

16. VC 1.1: 152. Jonas also uses similar words at the end of the VV: *monumentum viventibus reliqueret* (VV 10: 318).

17. *Venerandi ergo viri, Vedasti pontificis Atravatum urbis memoriam posteris commendare ratum ducimus, ut, unde originem duxerit, vel sane vitae cursum peregit, quamque finem habuerit, prosequi studiamus verbis.* VV 1: 309. Krusch (309 n. 1) notes that this has similarities to the words Jonas uses in his preface to the VC 1.1.

18. VJ preface: 327.

19. VC, *Versus ad mensam canendi*: 224–227.

20. *Nihil dignum simile horum gessere gestis Zmirneus Omerus et Mantuanus Maro.* VC, *Versus ad mensam canendi*: 225.

21. See, e.g., VC 1.1: 152; VC 2.10: 257; VV 1: 309; VJ preface: 326–327.

22. *Rutilantem atque eximio fulgore micantem sanctorum praesulum atque monachorum patrum solertia nobilium condidit vitam doctorum, scilicet ut posteris alma redolerent priscorum exempla:* VC 1.1: 151. Like Gregory of Tours in his *Liber vitae patrum*, Jonas used the singular *vitam* to express the unity of the shared religious life in Christ. In the VJ, he would further emphasize this unity: *Nec inmerito eorum virtutes ac gesta religiosa christiana laude fulciuntur, qui uno spiritu diversitate virtutum florentes, diversi quoque donorum muneribus adornantur.* VJ preface: 326–327.

23. VC 1.1: 151.

influence their readers to persevere in the religious life and to follow a particular form of monastic life.²⁴ In the VV, he wrote that these works sought to provoke the “minds of sinners” (*delinquentium animus*) to imitate the saints,²⁵ while in the VJ, he reveals that his intended audience was also the laity.²⁶ In this, Jonas follows the example of Columbanus, part of whose *Penitential* was also intended for the laity.²⁷

SOURCES

Jonas used a range of both oral and written sources that reveal his breadth of knowledge and skill as an author. His principal source for Columbanus was those who had personally known the saint. At the beginning of his letter to the abbots, he explains that he was asked to write the *Life* by the Bobbio community and that this was especially opportune, as those who had not only heard but also seen what Columbanus had accomplished were still alive to tell him their stories.²⁸ Throughout the *Life*, he names some of those who provided him with information, such as the abbots Athala, Eustasius, and Waldebert;²⁹ Chagnoald, bishop of Laon, who had once been a monk of Luxeuil and Columbanus’s personal assistant;³⁰ Burgundofara, abbess of Faremoutiers;³¹ Burgundofaro, bishop of Meaux;³² Gallus, Columbanus’s Irish disciple left behind in the valley of the Steinach in Switzerland;³³ and Theudegisilus, a monk of Luxeuil, who showed Jonas the severed finger that Columbanus had healed.³⁴ These oral accounts provided the kernel around which the VC was constructed, while revealing that Jonas undertook a considerable amount of research in contacting important Columbanian figures who were geographically distant from one another. Aidan Breen thought that Jonas may have relied on a dossier that had been compiled at

24. See O’Hara 2009b.

25. VV 1: 309; *animus* is here acc. plural (= *animos*).

26. *tam mentis hominum caelesti desiderio innexas, quam etiam simplicium animos hominibus profanis ad vitam provocemus aeternam*. VJ preface: 326.

27. *Paenitentiale* 13–25: 174–178.

28. *praesertim cum hii qui eo fuerunt in tempore et poenes ipsum patrata viderunt quam plurimi poenes vos suprestis sint, qui nobis non audita sed visa narrent, vel quae etiam nos per venerabiles viros Athalam et Eustasium didicimus*. VC, *Epistula ad Waldebertum et Bobolenum*: 145.

29. VC, *Epistula ad Waldebertum et Bobolenum*: 145; VC 2.21: 277.

30. VC 1.17: 185.

31. Presumably one of his sources, as Jonas stayed at Faremoutiers during the time of the nun Gibitruis’s death. VC 2.12: 262.

32. VC 2.21: 277.

33. VC 1.11: 172. It is an interesting question of how Jonas communicated with Gallus, as he notes that he was often told the story: *Haec nobis supra dictus Gallus sepe narravit*.

34. VC 1.15: 177.

Luxeuil during Columbanus's time there, but there is no evidence for this.³⁵ It is more likely that Jonas relied more on oral accounts, which, as Joaquín Martínez Pizarro has discussed, played a large part in the new mimetic style of early medieval narrative.³⁶

Jonas's information about Columbanus's Irish background must have come from one or more of the saint's Irish companions who had traveled with him from Bangor. Gallus or possibly some of the surviving Irish monks who had settled at Bobbio with Columbanus were most likely Jonas's informants. This is borne out by the orthography of Irish place and personal names used by Jonas, such as *Lagenorum terra*, *Sinilis*,³⁷ *Benechor*, and *Commogellus*,³⁸ which suggest native informants, as Michael Richter noted.³⁹ The poem on Ireland that Jonas inserted at the beginning of the *Vita* was also certainly written by an Irishman, possibly an Irish monk of Bobbio.⁴⁰

As already discussed, in his preface, Jonas specifically mentions a number of important monastic saints' Lives by Athanasius, Jerome, and Sulpicius Severus, as well as those of authoritative patristic figures Hilary, Ambrose, and Augustine by Venantius Fortunatus, Paulinus of Milan, and Possidius, respectively.⁴¹ These works, however, had little influence on Jonas's writing. This has prompted one commentator to suggest that Jonas's citing of these works, rather than indicating that they had served as models, was meant to place Columbanus in the tradition of the great monastic saints and to emphasize that he was a figure of unassailable orthodoxy, hence Jonas's reference to the "columns of the churches," Hilary, Ambrose, and Augustine. Stancliffe observed: "The precedents which Jonas invokes in this prefatory chapter are thus precedents for Columbanus's significance as an ecclesiastical figure, as Jonas sees it, not precedents for the type of saint's Life which he proposes to write."⁴² Yet there are also instances where we can detect some evidence of intertextuality. As an appendix to his French translation of the VC, Adalbert de Vogüé has provided a comprehensive list of sources, although it should be noted that not all of these were known or used by Jonas.⁴³

35. Breen 2011.

36. Pizarro 1989, 53–61.

37. VC 1.3: 157.

38. VC 1.4: 158.

39. Richter 2008.

40. VC 1.2: 152–153.

41. VC 1.1: 151–152.

42. Stancliffe 2001, 200.

43. De Vogüé 1988b.

Jonas's knowledge of the early desert monks, so admired by Columbanus, is also apparent in his use of a number of Jerome's saints' Lives, the *Life of Hilarion* and the *Life of Paul*, which he names in his preface. His reference in his letter to the abbots about how a literary work can in no way match the deeds it relates is a borrowing from a well-known phrase of Sallust also used by Jerome at the beginning of the *Life of Hilarion*. Jonas here is more probably drawing on Jerome rather than on Sallust.⁴⁴ There is also some similarity in a few miracle accounts that may reflect Jonas's reading of Jerome's hagiography. The demon that announces Columbanus's arrival in Paris has a parallel in the *Life of Hilarion*, where a demon also announces the arrival of the saint.⁴⁵ Columbanus miraculously changing the course of the boat on which he is being sent into exile in order to visit the shrine of Saint Martin at Tours is analogous to an episode in the *Life of Hilarion*, while Jonas's characterization of the boat's course in the water "as if by feathered flight" (*pennigero ceu volatu*) is an explicit borrowing from the *Life of Paul*.⁴⁶ There is also evidence of knowledge of Jerome's letters and exegetical works, which is interesting in light of Columbanus's great respect for the authority of Jerome. His *si vita comes fuerit*, the interpretation of which has led to some confusion, is a common phrase used by Jerome in his letters and exegetical writings, such as in his commentary on Isaiah. There were copies of Jerome's *Epistulae* and his *In Isaiam* in the early Bobbio library. A Bobbio manuscript now in Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, O 210 SUP, contains these works (CLA 3.358 and CLA 3.365). Likewise, his reference to the Persians and to the silver of Darius the Mede in his poem at the end of Book 1 is borrowed from Jerome's *Commentary on Daniel* with a similar connection.⁴⁷ Jerome's influence is also reflected in Jonas's citations from the Bible, some of which are taken from Jerome's translation, the Vulgate, even though this was not yet the sole authoritative translation at the time. The only hagiographical source to which Jonas specifically alludes apart from those in his preface to the VC is that dealing with Desiderius, the early-seventh-century bishop of Vienne, who, like Columbanus, was exiled for criticizing the sexual morals of King Theuderic II but who, unlike Columbanus, was martyred in 607.⁴⁸ Remarkably, the hagiographical account of Desiderius's life and martyrdom was written by a Visigothic king of Toledo, Sisebut, between 613 and 621, and it has been described as "perhaps the most

44. Jonas has *cum facta dictis non exsequentur*. VC, *Epistula ad Waldebertum et Bobolenum*: 146. Sallust, *Catilina* 3, has *primum quod facta dictis exaequanda sunt*, while Jerome, *Vita Hilarionis* 1.1, has *ut facta dictis exaequentur*. See VC 1.146 n. 3.

45. See de Vogüé 1988b, 154 n. 4.

46. VC 1.22: 201 and n. 2.

47. VC, *Versus ad mensam canendi*: 225. See de Vogüé 1988b, 169 n. 5.

48. On the cult of Bishop Desiderius and the Columbanian *familia*, see Fox 2012.

enigmatic work in all Visigothic literature.”⁴⁹ It would seem that the king wrote this as part of the *damnatio memoriae* of Theuderic and Brunhild and as an ideological vehicle to forge new and better relations with a united Merovingian kingdom under Chlothar II. It thus bears close similarities to the VC, also intent on blackening the image of Theuderic and Brunhild and legitimizing the rule of Chlothar, and, as such, shows how hagiographical works during this period were increasingly used in the political sphere. Like Jonas, Sisebut was also aiming at a “plurality of publics.”⁵⁰ The downfall of Brunhild and her progeny was for Jonas and Sisebut the direct result of the shameful treatment they inflicted on the holy men Columbanus and Desiderius. Both authors, by vilifying the previous regime, thus sought to win favor with the new one.

Jonas mentions the martyrdom of Desiderius as taking place during the period when Columbanus was in Bregenz, around 612. He notes: “At that time Theuderic and Brunhild were not only raging against Columbanus but they were also persecuting the most holy Desiderius, bishop of the city of Vienne. They first, having condemned him to exile, strove to subject him to numerous assaults. Finally, they crowned him with glorious martyrdom. His written deeds relate for what and how many adversities the glorious man deserved to hold triumphs before God.”⁵¹ It has generally been thought that Jonas is referring here to Sisebut’s account, which likewise dates the martyrdom to around this time, as the death of Theuderic II in 613 is mentioned as having occurred not long after the martyrdom. Ian Wood, however, has queried whether Jonas actually drew on Sisebut’s version. He suggests instead that Jonas relied on a later Life, dated by Bruno Krusch to the eighth century and written by an anonymous cleric of Vienne.⁵² Wood comments:

Ever since Krusch’s edition of the *Passiones Desiderii* it has been assumed that the Vienne version is eighth-century and, therefore, that Jonas’s brief reference is to an account of the martyrdom that must relate to that written by Sisebut. The key point in Krusch’s case for a late date for the anonymous text was that it misdated the martyrdom to c. 610, whereas Fredegar provides a firm date of 607. Fredegar, however, does nothing of the sort; all he does is provide a date for Desiderius’s return from exile.

49. Fontaine 1980, 93.

50. Fontaine 1980, 101.

51. *Eo itaque tempore Theudericus atque Brunichildis non solum adversum Columbanum insaniebant, verum etiam et contra sanctissimum Desiderium Viennensis urbis episcopum adversabantur. Quem primo exilio damnatum multis iniuriis adfligere nitebantur, ad postremum vero glorioso martyrio coronarunt; cuius gesta scripta habentur, quibus et quantis adversitatibus gloriosus apud Dominum meruit habere triumphos.* VC 1.27: 214 (O’Hara and Wood 2017, 160).

52. *Vita altera Desiderii episcopi Viennensis.*

Moreover Jonas supports a late date of c. 610 for the martyrdom. There is no good reason for thinking that the *Vienne Passio* is a late text nor that Jonas saw Sisebut's account; more likely, therefore, the text that he claims to have seen was the former.⁵³

He concludes that the *Vienne Passio* was Jonas's source. However, Wood is mistaken concerning Fredegar. It is very clear that Fredegar dates Desiderius's martyrdom to 607.⁵⁴ It is more likely that Jonas relied on Sisebut's *Vita*. This has interesting implications, as Fontaine argues that this *Vita* was principally intended for the Merovingian royal court.⁵⁵ As such, Jonas may have had access to this source through court circles.

There are a number of other hagiographical sources in which we can detect literary similarities to some of Jonas's miracle accounts. The appearance of a man with a cartload of provisions for the community at Annegray is similar to events in the *Historia monachorum* and the *Vita Frontonii*. The account in the same chapter of provisions sent by a neighboring abbot, Carontoc, miraculously arriving in Annegray has verbal similarities to an episode in the *Vita Frontonii*.⁵⁶ There are also some similarities to Gregory of Tours's hagiography. Albrecht Diem has argued that Jonas's account of Columbanus's dispute with Brunhild and Theuderic may have been modeled on Gregory's account of Bishop Nicetius of Trier in his *Liber vitae patrum* (17).⁵⁷ Diem has remarked that "Gregory of Tours's influence on Jonas has never been thoroughly investigated despite the fact that it sheds new light on the early reception of Gregory's work and gives us a deeper understanding of how Jonas both used and invented tradition. The *Life of Nicetius*, in particular, helped Jonas to place Columbanus's deeds and behaviour—especially his disrespect and claim of moral superiority towards rulers and his demand that the monastery be respected as a sacred space—in a line of well-accepted exempla from the past."⁵⁸ The *Life of Nicetius* is the only other Merovingian hagiographical text that relates the excommunication of a king,⁵⁹ and, as such, it could have provided Jonas with a model (although there are no verbal parallels). Furthermore, the miracle in which water was produced from the side of a rock by Columbanus's personal assistant also has a parallel in the *Liber vitae patrum*. Gregory writes: "*Statim igitur ad huius orationes*

53. Wood 1982, 70–71.

54. Fredegar 4.32: 21.

55. "It inaugurated and suggested, in fact, a 'new deal' for relations between Visigothic Spain and the reunified Gaul, thanks to a tacit complicity between Sisebut and Clothar." Fontaine 1980, 125.

56. VC 1.7: 165; *Vita Frontonii* 7. See de Vogüé 1988b, 115 n. 5; 1988a, 74.

57. Diem 2007a, 538–542.

58. Diem 2007a, 538.

59. Diem 2007a, 540.

gutta lattices a caute prorumpens." Jonas has "*statim . . . orationibus Dominum deprecatur . . . moxque latex producta.*"⁶⁰ Similarly, the unusual miracle in which Columbanus placed four Insular monks at the corners of the harvest field, which resulted in the rain falling outside the limits of the field but not within the harvest, recalls a similar miracle in Gregory's *Histories*.⁶¹

Diem has also shown the original way in which Jonas used the work of John Cassian in the *VJ*.⁶² Next to Jerome, Cassian is the most important patristic author used by Jonas. Jonas cites explicitly from the *Conferences* in the *VJ*, while Cassian's other work, the *Institutes*, may have inspired Jonas's use of the term *instituta* for Columbanus's doctrine. Both works were represented in the early Bobbio library, although in fragments.⁶³ In the *VJ*, Jonas dealt with John's teaching in chapter 18 where he drew heavily on Cassian's *Conferences*, a series of twenty-four interviews with famous desert fathers in which Cassian attempted to convey the spiritual wisdom of the desert fathers to the nascent monastic culture in Gaul. But woven into these stories was Cassian's own vision of how monks could strive to overcome sinfulness. In Cassian's view, the ascetic struggle for perfection and the contemplation of God was a constant one that could never be completely attained. Jonas's use of Cassian is interesting because, as Diem notes, "In hagiographical texts John Cassian left incidental traces. Yet no Merovingian hagiographer used Cassian as intensely as Jonas of Bobbio did in the *VJ*."⁶⁴ Jonas adapted Cassian's thoughts to reflect his own views on the monastic life, so revealing the two men's different perceptions of how the monastic life ought to be lived. Jonas essentially used two ideas of Cassian relating to the inherent sinfulness of man and the techniques to overcome it.⁶⁵ The first concerned the sins of "gluttony" (*gula/castrimagia*), "vainglory" (*xenodoxia/aelatio*), and "pride" (*arrogantia/superbia*). John told his monks that such sins led to Adam's fall and expulsion from Paradise.⁶⁶ This idea is taken from the fifth book of the *Conferences*.⁶⁷ Second, Jonas turned to the issue of how the monk can achieve saintly virtues. This section is closely based on a passage in Cassian, and Diem compares the similar vocabulary in both works, showing Jonas's dependence.⁶⁸ This is where we can see Jonas parting from Cassian's

60. VC 1.9: 168; *Liber vitae patrum* 11.2. See de Vogüé 1988b, 118 n. 5; 1988a, 75.

61. VC 1.13: 173–174; *DLH* 4.34. See de Vogüé 1988b, 124 n. 3.

62. Diem 2008, 39–45.

63. See Zironi 2004, 163. *CLA* 1.41, 4.44, 4.455.

64. Diem 2008, 41.

65. Diem 2008, 42.

66. *VJ* 18.340.

67. Diem 2008, 43.

68. Diem 2008, 44.

monastic philosophy. As already mentioned, for Cassian, monastic perfection was an elusive goal that could never be fully attained. It was different for Jonas, for whom such qualities as humility that Cassian's monks had to strive for were an inherent, given quality of his saints. In this sense, Jonas had a more idealistic vision of the monastic life than Cassian. Yet, as Diem comments, "Jonas's reading of Cassian was typical of early medieval reception of Cassian. While seeing him as a great monastic authority early medieval readers did not register the central thesis behind Cassian's writing, that of the constant and ultimately futile struggle of the ascetic to achieve spiritual perfection. . . . By quoting him while avoiding him, Jonas dealt with Cassian just as most other early medieval monastic authors did."⁶⁹

While the patristic imprint on Jonas is largely confined to Jerome and Cassian, it is surprising that Augustine's influence is hardly apparent. The only instance where a possible verbal echo may be detected is in the cries of the impenitent Faremoutiers nuns of "Tomorrow, tomorrow" (*Cras, cras*), which may have been drawn from Augustine's *Enarationes in Psalmos*.⁷⁰ It is peculiar that the influence of Augustine is not greater, as the early library at Bobbio contained many of his writings, including *De Civitate Dei*, *De Doctrina Christiana*, and *Enarationes in Psalmos*. But this is also apparent in Columbanus's own writings, where the influence of Jerome and Cassian is much more prevalent than that of Augustine.⁷¹

The allusion to a phrase of Sallust, already mentioned, although probably derived from Jerome, brings us to an important feature of Jonas's writing and his use of sources: his knowledge of and allusions to Classical literature. For a writer of this period, Jonas shows a remarkable knowledge of the classics. In this, he is again comparable to his fellow Italian Venantius Fortunatus in the previous century, who was more flamboyant with his Classical knowledge. Jonas grew up in an ancient Roman town in northern Italy, and he was clearly imbued with a keen sense of the Classical past. His Classical knowledge may have been the product of a liberal school education in Susa. References to the works of Virgil, Ovid, Sallust, Livy (possibly Livius Andronicus rather than Titus Livius), Pliny, Julius Caesar, Varro, and Juvenius can be identified in the VC, predominantly but not exclusively in Book 1.⁷² Jonas provides important evidence for the reception of

69. Diem 2008, 45.

70. VC 2.19: 274; *Enarationes in Psalmos* 102.16. De Vogüé 1988b, 222 n. 11; 1988a, 100.

71. See the Classical and Patristic Index in Walker 1970a, 221, which lists only two instances of Columbanus's use of Augustine compared with sixteen instances where he cites Cassian and fifteen where he cites Jerome.

72. For a list of the Classical authors Jonas used, see the *index fontium* in de Vogüé 1988b, 258–266; Breen 2011, 21.

Classical texts in the period prior to the Carolingian Renaissance. Richter has remarked that the VC is “an important and hitherto unappreciated source for the evaluation of essential elements of other sources transmitted independently and often not in the original.”⁷³ Jonas’s explicit citation of Livy, for example, “as Livy says, nothing is so sacred in religion and so enclosed in a protected place that sexual desire cannot enter” (*ut Livius ait, nihil esse tam sanctum religione tamque custodia clausum, quo penetrari libido nequeat*), is important because Jonas may be citing from one of the lost books of Livy’s *Histories*.⁷⁴ Alternatively, the citations from Livy may come from the Republican poet Livius Andronicus and not from the more famous historian. Although only fragments of Livius Andronicus survive, his work was known to Sextus Pompeius Festus, whose own work was supposedly available in Bobbio, and also later to Paul the Deacon, who epitomized him.⁷⁵ The historian Livy is, however, used implicitly in Jonas’s account of Bobbio where he mentions the famous Battle of the Trebbia at which Hannibal defeated the Romans.⁷⁶ However, while mentioning Hannibal’s loss of men and animals to the harsh winter conditions, he fails to note that the Carthaginian general won against the Romans. His failure to acknowledge the Roman defeat may have been due, as Krusch has suggested, to Roman pride.⁷⁷ This, like Cassian, is another instance where we can detect Jonas tailoring his sources. As previously mentioned, Jonas’s sense of identity can also be discerned in his use of *Ausonia*, the poetic name for Italy used by Virgil.⁷⁸ Perhaps Jonas’s use of this archaic term for his country (he also uses it twice in his chapter on Abbot Bertulf)⁷⁹ reflects an unwillingness to acknowledge the contemporary divisions and conquest of Italy brought about by the Lombard invasion. He certainly shows no attachment to the Lombard polity. Unsurprisingly, Virgil is the Classical author Jonas cites most. His *Illi poma palmarum magnopere peregrina dirigunt, . . . sunt mitia molles castaneae poma* echoes *Eclogues* 1.80: *sunt nobis mitia poma, Castaneae molles et pressi copia lactis*.⁸⁰ His poetical description of dawn, *Erat enim mane, priusquam aurora funderet gratia lumina terris* recalls *Aeneid* 4.584, *novo spargebat lumine terras*.⁸¹ Also, his characteristic use of *rerum*

73. Richter 2008, 51.

74. VC 1.3: 156 and n. 1.

75. See notes in O’Hara and Wood 2017 for further discussion.

76. VC 1.30: 221.

77. *sed notissimam Romanorum cladem Ionas silentio praeteriit amore patria, nisi fallor, ductus*. VC 1.30: 221 n. 6.

78. VC, *Epistula ad Waldebertum et Bobolenum*: 148.

79. VC 2.23: 281.

80. VC, *Epistula ad Waldebertum et Bobolenum*: 148 and n. 3.

81. VC 2.2: 233 and n. 4.

reppertor as a synonym for God⁸² recalls a similar phase used by Virgil but for the pagan God Jupiter.⁸³ A similar case of Jonas borrowing pagan mythological terms for Christian entities occurs in his reference to the devil, who incites Agrestius to attack Columbanus's reputation (*fama*) as a *chelidrus*, a snake given as the first of the malevolent reptiles in *Georgics* 3.415.⁸⁴ In addition to Virgil, Jonas also indicates knowledge of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a work that was not well known before the Carolingian Renaissance,⁸⁵ possibly Caesar's *De Bello Gallico*,⁸⁶ Pliny the Elder's *Historia Naturalis*,⁸⁷ and Varro's *De lingua Latina*.⁸⁸ It should be noted that these Classical allusions are confined to the VC and are not found in Jonas's other works. Might this suggest that Jonas used such sources in the VC to give added style and pretension that he felt was not needed in his other, more conventional works of the VV and VJ? Whatever the reason, Jonas's use of such sources is all the more remarkable in a Christian culture where the profane literature of the Classical past was increasingly dismissed as irrelevant and irreligious.

Jonas was also exceptional for using another source material often neglected by hagiographers: Gregory of Tours's *Decem libri historiarum* (DLH), completed in 594. This provides one of the earliest instances of the reception and use of Gregory's great work of history. It also gives us another example of how Jonas used history. Although he states in his letter to the abbots that he has been meticulous in including accurate information, he was not averse to changing historical facts. The VC was a near-contemporary account that relied in large part on eyewitnesses who were still living, so Jonas had to be particularly skillful with what he chose to write about or leave out. He was less constricted in his two other works, but lack of information meant that he resorted to Gregory of Tours

82. See, e.g., VC 2.5: 236.

83. See *Aeneid* 12.829: *hominum rerumque repertor*. Noted by Krusch 1905, 239. n. 1.

84. VC 2.9: 246. Noted by de Vogüé 1988b, 193 n. 1.

85. *Haec genetrix, postquam sopor membra laxavit et caecas mundo surgens aurora pepulit tenebras*. VC 1.2: 154. *Metamorphoses* 7.703: *Lutea mane videt pulsus Aurora tenebris*.

86. Jonas's description of the site of Besançon is similar to that of Caesar (*De Bello Gallico* 1.38) although this could be from personal observation and not necessarily from reading Caesar: VC 1.20: 193 and n. 1.

87. *Illi dites balsami lacrimam ex Engaddi floresque aromatum ex Arabia*. VC, *Epistula ad Waldebertum et Bobolenum*: 148. Pliny mentions that balsam is a specialty of Judea, and Engaddi was, after Jerusalem, the most fertile place for this: *Historia Naturalis* 5.17 and 12.25. Also, Jonas mentions a plant called *saliunca* (VC, *Epistula ad Waldebertum et Bobolenum*: 148), which is found in the Alps around the Saint-Bernard Pass (north of Susa) and which is mentioned in the *Historia Naturalis* 11.43. This could also have been derived from personal knowledge.

88. Jonas mentions a particular bird (*alitem*), which he notes the *vulgus* call a "duck" because of its swimming: *a nando anatem vulgo vocant*. Varro has: *Rana a sua dicta voce, anas a nando*. Isidore of Seville, in his *Etymologies* (12.7, 51), also gives a similar explanation, so it is possible that Jonas relied on Isidore here, although there is no other indication that he knew the *Etymologies*.

for historical background. As such, the imprint of the *DLH* is more noticeable in the *VV* and the *VJ* than in the *VC*. At the opening of the *VV*, for example, Jonas copied passages from Gregory about Clovis defeating the Alamanni. This was essentially the beginning of the Christianization of the Franks, and the aim was to make Vedast a part of it.⁸⁹ In the *VJ*, Jonas also turned to Gregory to provide a historical context for his subject. Although there is less direct textual borrowing from Gregory in the *VJ*, Diem has shown that Jonas used a range of information from Gregory despite some historical inconsistencies. Also, Jonas's note at the beginning of his account of Columbanus's rift with Brunhild stating that Sigibert was killed at a villa at Vitry may echo Gregory's account of this event in *DLH* (5.1). But Jonas's placement of Vitry in the vicinity of Arras (*apud Victuriacum villam publicam, quae in suburbano Atravitis urbis sita est*) is not mentioned by Gregory and is thus an independent addition by Jonas, who, of course, knew the area well from his missionary work.⁹⁰

Jonas's use of Gregory is significant, moreover, in the context of the earliest reception of the *DLH* and the political climate in Merovingian Gaul during the second half of the seventh century.⁹¹ In the last four books of the *DLH* (Books 7–10), Gregory dealt with events following the death of Chilperic, and here he seems to have anticipated the unification of the Frankish kingdoms under Childebert II. Childebert is seen in a leading role as Guntram's successor, in contrast to Chlothar II, Chilperic's son, whose importance is minimized, with Gregory even alluding to his illegitimacy.⁹² However, after Gregory's death, the political situation was completely reversed, as Chlothar II became the sole ruler and Childebert's progeny were exterminated. There followed an active *damnatio memoriae* of Childebert and his sons by the new ruling regime. Gregory's work, unfavorable to the new regime, was also modified so as to conform to the changed political situation. Books 7–10, those unfavorable to the current regime, were left out in the copying of the work, so that a six-book recension developed. Reimitz has seen the production and dissemination of Gregory's works as linked to the rise of new aristocratic elites and "precisely this social and political context around the middle and in the second half of the seventh century, which informed the work of the six-book-version. The manuscript transmission indicates that toward the end of the seventh century, interest in the reworked Gregory was particularly great in the new northern cultural and political centers of the realm."⁹³ The three oldest manuscripts of the six-book recension

89. *VV* 2: 310–311.

90. *VC* 1.18: 186.

91. On the transmission of Gregory's *DLH*, see Goffart 1987; Reimitz 2003, 2015.

92. See Reimitz 2003, 257.

93. Reimitz 2003, 259.

were all produced in the northeastern regions, at places such as Jouarre and Corbie, both Columbanian foundations,⁹⁴ while Fredegar, a chronicler with strong Columbanian connections, also made use of the six-book version in his *Chronicle*. It is no surprise, then, that Jonas, an abbot of a northern monastic foundation since the 640s, knew of and used Gregory's *DLH*. Jonas's three saints' Lives are thus important sources for the early reception of the *DLH* and for the way in which Jonas, like his contemporaries, adapted Gregory's great historical work.

LANGUAGE AND STYLE

Jonas wrote in an idiosyncratic Latin, yet it was imbued with Classical influences. His learning is apparent in his works, as is his abstruse poetical prose. His quintessential style has been described as not one of variety but one of accumulation and verbosity in which the difference between poetry and prose has been removed and poetical set phrases act as ornamental elements: "Nicht Abwechslung, sondern Häufung, Verdichtung, ist das Stilideal des Jonas. Der Unterschied von Poesie und Prosa ist eingeebnet. Dichterische Formeln dienen als Schmuckelemente dieser merowingischen Kunstprosa."⁹⁵ *Kunstprosa* is a suitable description of Jonas's style. Jarrot was another who was struck by the author's poetical style; he wrote that Jonas conceived of his work as "une oeuvre de poésie; il la veut riche et ornée de tout l'éclat du style poétique."⁹⁶ Jonas shares with other early medieval authors a dramatic mimetic style influenced by oral storytelling and centered on memorable scenes.⁹⁷ His literary use of the historic present, direct speech, actions, gestures, and objects made his narratives more vivid and memorable. Columbanus refusing to eat the food provided by Theuderic and smashing the vessels,⁹⁸ Columbanus's confrontation with Theuderic in the refectory at Luxeuil,⁹⁹ Columbanus sitting on a rotten oak tree reading a book while the battle between Theuderic and Theudebert raged at Tolbiac,¹⁰⁰ Jonas's beautiful description of a squirrel frolicking along Columbanus's arm,¹⁰¹ Vedast smashing the beer vats at the feast of Hocinus for

94. Reimitz 2003, 260.

95. Berschin 1988a, 41.

96. Jarrot 1897, 53.

97. See Pizarro 1989, who substantially expands and modifies some of the observations in the classic studies in Auerbach 2003 [1954]; 1993 [1965].

98. VC 1.19.

99. VC 1.19.

100. VC 1.28.

101. VC 1.15.

the Frankish king,¹⁰² and John admonishing Agrestius in a vision after Agrestius left the monastery in a huff following John's request that the congregation wait outside at the consecration¹⁰³ are just some examples of Jonas's dramatic mimetic style. Jonas's language has been analyzed by philologists, so my intention here is not to add to their research¹⁰⁴ but merely to summarize the main aspects of Jonas's writing. All agree on the significance of Jonas's work for this period and on the quality of the Latin, despite the use of some vulgarized words. Krusch partly attributed to Jonas in some way the renewal of the state of letters in Gaul from the middle of the seventh century.¹⁰⁵ Walter Berschin viewed Jonas's effect as significant, seeing him as a representative of the canon of biography whose work soon attained a classic status in its field. Similarly, Roques was prompted to declare, having studied Jonas's works, that the seventh century did not seem so completely dark and that in certain regions, particularly at Susa, there persisted a high level of culture ("d'un niveau de culture assez estimable").¹⁰⁶

Jonas's Latin, like Fortunatus's, was a product of Italy. As all languages are subject to change, the Latin used in Italy in the seventh century was (not surprisingly) quite removed from Classical Latin. Dag Norberg attributed the changes in Latin in Italy during the sixth and seventh centuries to external influences, a consequence of invasion and the political divisions within Italy. He detects three influences stemming from three separate groups. The political domination of Italy during this time by the Byzantines and the Lombards is reflected linguistically with a new penetration of Greek and Germanic words into the language, and a cultural influence is seen from Hiberno-Latin, a consequence of Columbanus's foundation at Bobbio.¹⁰⁷ Jonas is the principal example of the last group, and the influence of Hiberno-Latin can be seen most clearly in the poem about Ireland included at the beginning of the *VC*,¹⁰⁸ a poem that bears similarities to the obscure collection of poems known as the *Hisperica famina*, from which derives the name "Hisperic Latin" to describe the difficult Latin written in Ireland during the sixth and seventh centuries.¹⁰⁹ Jonas's Latin is a good example of the linguistic changes that occurred during this time. These changes can be seen in the influence of the spoken language on the written,

102. *VV* 7.

103. *VJ* 9.

104. Jonas's language has been most fully discussed by Krusch 1905, 57–58; 1893, 435–439; Roques 1971; Löfstedt 1974; Berschin 1988a, 38–41.

105. Krusch 1905, 58; 1893, 427.

106. Roques 1971, 52.

107. Norberg 1958, 488–489.

108. *VC* 1.2: 152–153.

109. Norberg 1958, 490.

indicating that more rapid developments were taking place in the spoken language.¹¹⁰ These are sometimes described as vulgarized words and are a common feature of the Latin of this period, although more important are the changes in phonology and grammar (perhaps more obvious in Fredegar).¹¹¹ New words and new meanings for old words develop. Jonas uses new words (neologisms) such as *auliga* (instead of *aulicus*) for “courtier,” *barriditas* for “arrogance,” *calmen* for “piece of land,” and *remiger* (instead of *remex*) for “rower,” while *superi* means “those who are still living” and not “those in heaven,” as was more usual. The latter he calls *candidati*, “the white ones.” The influence of poetry on his prose is clearly marked, a feature associated with later Merovingian hagiography, in which the prefaces tended to be written in a more complex style than that of the main text. They were often written in a simple style of rhymed prose that sought to impress the addressee with the author’s learning, although this type of prose was more common during the eleventh and twelfth centuries.¹¹²

The principal difficulty with studying Jonas’s language is that the earliest surviving copies of his works were made long after Jonas wrote. The earliest manuscripts of the VC, for example, were produced by Carolingian scribes two hundred years after Jonas.¹¹³ This is likewise the case for the VV and the VJ, the earliest manuscripts of which date from the ninth and tenth centuries, respectively.¹¹⁴ It is generally the case with Merovingian saints’ Lives that we owe their existence to the fact that they were copied during the Carolingian period. As such, we do not know to what extent the scribes may have changed Jonas’s Latin. This was, after all, the period in which the Carolingians sought to reform and standardize Latin usage, based on Classical Latin. In general, however, Jonas’s Latin, like that of other Merovingian hagiographers, departs from the strict grammatical rules of Classical Latin.

In the area of phonetics, there are often changes in vowels and consonants. For example *i* replaces *e*: *conquirere* instead of *conqueri* and (vice versa) *elegeret* instead of *eligeret*. *S* often goes to *ex*: *expectaculum*, *expoliator*, and (vice versa) *spiravit* for *expiravit*. *M*, *n*, and *s* are often dropped at the end of a word—*suffragio* for *suffragium*, *Luxovio* for *Luxovium*—while *f* can replace *ph*, as in *falangas* and *scafam*.

In morphology, gender changes are apparent, as in the decline of the neuter. The neuter nouns of the second declension become masculine, and vice

110. See Banniard 1992b.

111. My thanks to Thomas Charles-Edwards for this point.

112. See Fouracre and Gerberding 1996, 73.

113. St Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, 553, and Metz, Grand Séminaire, 1, both from the mid-ninth century.

114. The earliest manuscript of the VV is Montpellier, Bibliothèque Universitaire, H. 55 (8th/9th cent.); that of the VJ is Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 11748 (10th cent.). See Krusch 1905, 297, 323.

versa: *natalem solum, solo quem*. Feminine nouns can become masculine, such as *heremus ille* and *eodem heremo*. Words like *vir* become indeclinable, while Jonas confuses declensions such as *de frequentia celebrae lucis* instead of *celebris*. He constructs new deponents such as *peragrari*, while deponent verbs often have a passive meaning and active verbs a passive meaning. The ending *-ent* replaces *-unt* in the third-person present plural of the third conjugation: *aient, dicent, poscent*. He uses “declination variations” for names in the first declension, such as *Domma, -ane* and *Leudeberta, -ane*. The preposition often appears behind the reference word, as in *se contra* and *se inter*. He highly favored the use of the genitive, similarly to Jerome, and the frequent use of the ablative without prepositions, like the style of the Latin historians Sallust and Suetonius.¹¹⁵ A characteristic of Jonas’s word order is the anastrophe, the inversion of the usual order of words. Indirect speech becomes direct speech, and vice versa. It has also been noted that the orthography of *commotasti* (for *commutasti*), which appears in the St Gallen manuscript (553), may be a characteristic of Irish-influenced Latin.¹¹⁶ Jonas also liked using synonyms, as in *pomorum parulorum . . . quae etiam bullugas uulgo appellant; tegumenta manuum, quos Galli wantos vocant; and vas . . . magnum, quem vulgo cupam vocant*.¹¹⁷ Here he gives the Latin name of the object and its popular or “vulgarized” form. In the case of *bulluca*, which means “prune,” the word is attested primarily from the north of the Loire and from eastern Francia, the area in which both Columbanus and Jonas were active.¹¹⁸ A *cuba* seems to refer to a vat (*uas magnum*), which, in the case mentioned by Jonas, was capable of holding almost 175 liters of beer (over 300 British pints). Roques suggests that this word would have originally been *cuppa* but that the double *p* changed to *b* through labial mutation. Jonas uses the word *hostis* generally to mean “enemy,” but on two occasions, in the plural it means “army,” while the word *jumentum*, “donkey,” often has the meaning “horse,” as does *vehiculum*, as in *vehicula quiete fovet*.¹¹⁹

Jonas’s choice of vocabulary is perhaps the easiest and clearest of his features to study. His favorite word is *ovans* (“rejoicing”), while *uber* or *ubertas* (“fruitful” or “abundant”) is another favored word.¹²⁰ He loves to call heavenly light *fulva lux* (“reddish yellow/yellow light”),¹²¹ while he uses many names for God, similar to the Classical and ancient Christian usage. God is thus *rerum sator*,

115. See Roques 1971, 18–19.

116. Löfstedt 1974, 81.

117. See Berschin 1988a, 40; Roques 1971, 49.

118. Roques 1971, 49.

119. VC 2.5: 237.

120. Berschin 1988a, 40.

121. VC 1.17: 184.

reppertor rerum, iustus arbiter, iustus iudex, rerum creator, bonitatis ac munerum institutor, and largitor immensus. This range of terminology is found in all of Jonas's hagiography. In the *VV*, for example, we also find *ovans*,¹²² *aequus arbiter rerum sator aeternus*,¹²³ *rectus arbiter*,¹²⁴ *rerum auctorum*,¹²⁵ and *rerum sator*,¹²⁶ while in the *VJ*, the word *ovans* occurs five times.¹²⁷ While Jonas made an effort to show richness of language and embellishment of speech, he did not have a problem with repeating words. As Berschin notes, "Not variety, but accumulation and density [*Verdichtung*] of prose is the style ideal of Jonas."¹²⁸ In this, his is similar to the baroque, ornate style of Venantius Fortunatus.

There are also a number of stock phrases that may be characterized as distinctly Jonian and Columbanian, "Merovingian hagiographic 'jargon,'"¹²⁹ which in some cases can be used to trace the influence of the *VC* on other works of hagiography. The term *datur intellegi* ("so that it may be understood") is a good example. Jonas uses this as an introduction to the meaning of a story or an event. This unusual Jonian term appears in the *Vita Sadalbergae abbatissae Laudunensis*, the *Passio Praejecti*, and the later *Vita Boniti*.¹³⁰ Both the *Vita Sadalbergae* and the *Passio Praeiectionis episcopi et martyris Augustodunensis* cite explicitly from the *VC*, but the authors' use of *datur intellegi* further shows their literary dependency on Jonas. Diem has also commented on this set of terms in the *VJ*, arguing that the terms appear "partly exclusively, partly predominantly in texts related to Columbanian monasticism."¹³¹ Terms such as *tenor regule*, *septa monasterii*, and *septa coenubii*, which appear in the *VC*, the *VJ*, later hagiographic texts, Columbanian Rules, and a number of Merovingian monastic exemptions, echo Columbanian attitudes toward living in a community under a rule and the inviolability of the monastic space.¹³² There are a number of other characteristic terms that, according to Diem, make a text "Columbanian."¹³³ A few of these terms do appear in earlier works, such as the *Regula Magistri*, Gregory of Tours's *Liber in Gloria confessorum*, Baudonivia's *Vita Radegundis*, but in the majority of cases, they were employed in Columbanian-influenced

122. *VV* 1: 309.

123. *VV* 1: 309.

124. *VV* 1: 309.

125. *VV* 2: 310.

126. *VV* 10: 318.

127. *VJ* 2: 330; 6: 332; 15: 338; 16: 339; 20: 343.

128. Berschin 1988a, 41.

129. Fouracre and Gerberding 1996, 70.

130. Cited in Berschin 1988a, 47 and n. 112.

131. Diem 2008, 27.

132. Diem 2008, 27 and n. 180–181.

133. Diem 2008, 27–28.

texts. Columbanus's *Regula coenobialis* (RCoen.), Jonas's *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines*, the *Passio Praeiectionis episcopi et martyris Augustodunensis*, Audoin's *Vita Eligii episcopi Noviomagensis*, Fredegar's *Chronicle*, the *Vita Galli vetustissima*, Walahfrid's *Vita S. Galli*, and the *Vita Walarici abbatis Leuconensis* all use this set of terminology.¹³⁴

Another distinctive feature of Jonas's language, and the final aspect to consider here, is his use of Greek. He appears to have had some knowledge of Greek, reflected in a number of Grecisms he uses. In this, he was similar to his biographical master, Columbanus, whose use of Grecisms has been seen as "the most remarkable" feature of his Latinity.¹³⁵ In total, Columbanus uses sixty Grecisms in his writings, ranging from such words as *anathematizatio*, *cathegita*, and *micrologus* to *Peristera*, *rheuma*, and *zelare*.¹³⁶ Jonas uses fewer, around twenty-five in total. These include *absinthium*, *agapis*, *antidotum*, *baiola*, *cathenatos*, *cenodoxia*, *dogma*, *gastrimargia*, *innexos*, *melos cytharae*, *microloga*, *phalanx*, *psalmigraphus*, *rheuma*, *sarcophagus*, *sophus*.¹³⁷ Almost half of them, eleven, are Grecisms that also appear in Columbanus's writings: *antidotum*, *cenodoxia*, *cyclus*, *dogma*, *eulogiae*, *microloga*, *orthodoxa fides*, *rheuma*, *schisma*, *sophus*, *synodus*. This shows some overlap in terminology and, particularly in the use of the rare term *microloga*, dependency. Christine Mohrmann has commented that Jonas's Latin "in many respects resembles that of Columban: not only does he imitate, particularly in the crucial passages of his work, the florid style of Columban, but he also follows him in his preference for Greek words (*agapis*, *antidotum*, *cenodoxia*, etc.), and for poetical words and unusual rhetorical expressions."¹³⁸ A number of other similarities between Jonas and Columbanus deserve attention. The obvious Grecisms we would expect to find in both of these monastic authors are *abbas* and *monachus/monachi*, but both terms are used infrequently. In contrast with Benedict, Columbanus normally employed the Latin term *senior* to denote "abbot." *Abbas* is used in the RCoen., but these passages are suspected of being later additions. Walker, however, notes that the term is found in an undoubtedly genuine passage in Columbanus's *RM*.¹³⁹ Nevertheless, *senior* was more commonly used by Columbanus, and Jonas again follows Columbanus's usage. Columbanus never referred to himself as *abbas*, and Jonas also does not use this term. This may have a theological reason, as

134. Diem 2008, 27–28 n. 183–207.

135. Walker 1949–1950, 117.

136. Walker 1949–1950 provides a list.

137. This is not a conclusive list. See "Index rerum et verborum," edited by Wilhelm Levison, in Krusch 1905, 355–366.

138. Mohrmann 1962, 230.

139. Walker 1949–1950, 118.

abba is the term used in the New Testament to refer to God the Father.¹⁴⁰ Both Columbanus and Jonas simply styled themselves *peccator*. This is one of the reasons for considering the prologue to the *VJ*, in which Jonas is styled *abbas*, as an interpolation. Jonas addresses Waldebert and Bobolenus in the dedicatory letter to the *VC* as *domini*, *patres*, and *praesules*, never as abbots. Although the term *monachus/monachi* does appear in Columbanus's writings, Jonas generally does not use it. Rather, he uses a range of communal terms, such as *caterva*, *cohors*, *congregatio*, *consodales*, and *plebes*, perhaps intended to emphasize the important communal aspect of Columbanian monasticism.¹⁴¹

In a period in which there was a general ignorance of Greek, both Columbanus and Jonas were noteworthy.¹⁴² It is also said that Columba of Iona, Columbanus's elder contemporary, had studied Greek grammar.¹⁴³ Gregory the Great, for example, although he had been papal legate to Constantinople, admitted to having little knowledge of Greek, although some Grecisms can be detected in his writings.¹⁴⁴ Columbanus's knowledge of Greek probably derived from his Irish monastic formation and cultural influence from British monastic teachers.¹⁴⁵ Walker commented that "in the time of St. Columbanus, there was in Ireland a wide interest in Greek studies, and an opportunity for acquiring a colloquial, if not a literary, knowledge of that tongue."¹⁴⁶ He also noted some of the colloquial Greek expressions used by Columbanus, such as *bubum* and *chilosus*.¹⁴⁷ Jonas's knowledge of Greek, on the other hand, probably stemmed from the Byzantine presence in Italy. Susa had been under the control of the Byzantines until the late sixth century, when it was ceded to the Franks, and a traditional school may have survived there. Susa's importance as a nodal and commercial hub may have attracted grecophone Syrian traders whose presence in other urban centers in Gaul is well attested. It was, however, above all, the Byzantine reconquest of the mid-sixth century that reintroduced Greek into the peninsula. Norberg notes that the spoken language, especially in central Italy, appropriated many Greek words during this period.¹⁴⁸ This Greek influence can also be detected in texts, and Jonas's work is one important example.

140. Mark 14: 36; Romans 8: 15; Galatians 4: 6. Faithful Christians were adopted sons and so *cohaeredes Christi*. My thanks to Thomas Charles-Edwards for this point.

141. On the terminology for community used by Jonas, see de Vogüé 1988a, 64–71.

142. On knowledge of Greek during this period, see Berschin 1988b; Herren 1988.

143. *Amrae Choluim Chille* 8.14: 112.

144. See Riché 1976, 147; Norberg 1958, 488.

145. Walker 1949–1950, 129. On Insular knowledge of Greek, see also Howlett 1998; Moran 2012.

146. Walker 1949–1950, 130.

147. Walker 1949–1950, 131.

148. Norberg 1958, 488.

AUDIENCE

The question of audience is central when considering whom Jonas's works were intended for and the reasons for his writing. Although Jonas's hagiography would have been written mainly for religious communities, Merovingian saints' Lives were also intended for a wider public audience. This public and at times political function has been seen as an important feature of Merovingian hagiography.¹⁴⁹ Jonas also aimed at reaching a wider readership. Paul Fouracre commented that during this time, the audience seems to have been made up of listeners rather than readers, although the exact nature of this audience, whether it was secular or purely ecclesiastical, is more difficult to assess.¹⁵⁰ In contrast with some other works of Merovingian hagiography, such as Bishop Audoin's *Vita Eligii*, whose author states that he used a simple style so that the Life would be understood by the uneducated, Jonas's Latin and his style are much more complex.¹⁵¹ Indeed, Krusch credited Jonas with introducing a more florid Latin style of hagiographical writing into Merovingian Gaul.¹⁵² This elaborate and difficult Latin may indicate that Jonas's hagiography was intended for an elite audience. The VC was certainly aimed at the ecclesiastical and political elite of its day, while the VV and the VJ were probably also aimed at an audience that was not exclusively confined to the cathedral of Arras or the monastery of Réomé.

At the beginning of the VV, Jonas states that the objective of such works is to "provoke the minds of sinners to the imitation of their cult" (*delinquentium animus studeant provocare*),¹⁵³ which is similar to his statement in the VJ that he was writing "to summon both the minds of men attached to celestial desires and even the souls of the simple, [men being profane,] to eternal life" (*simplicium animos hominibus profanis ad vitam provocemus aeternam*),¹⁵⁴ indicating that his audience was not exclusively ecclesiastical but also included the laity. There is also evidence for an aural audience in the longer version of the VV, which is represented in three manuscripts, including the earliest, Montpellier, Bibliothèque Universitaire, H. 55, from the end of the eighth or the beginning of the ninth century, where the audience of the work is referred to as both readers and listeners.¹⁵⁵ Although Jonas was writing the VJ for a small monastic

149. Fontaine 1976; Helvétius 2012a.

150. Fouracre and Gerberding 1996, 73.

151. On the Latin of the *Vita Eligii*, see Banniard 1992a.

152. "Die V. Vedastis ist nämlich nicht in der alten Merowingischen Schriftsprache, sondern in jenem gekünstelten Latein geschrieben, welches durch Jonas von Susa in Gallien eingeführt worden ist." Krusch 1893, 435.

153. VV 1: 309.

154. VJ preface: 326.

155. VV 10: 319.

community in Burgundy, he was clearly also envisaging a lay audience. It is interesting to note Réomé's proximity to the royal Merovingian villa at Époisses, the place where, in the *VC*, Columbanus confronted King Theuderic II and refused commensality.¹⁵⁶ This might suggest that Jonas was bearing in mind the possibility of a local noble and royal audience. As in the *VC*, there is a similar stress in the *VJ* on the sacredness of monastic space and that lay access to it should be restricted.¹⁵⁷ However, both the *VV* and the *VJ* had a more restricted circulation than the *VC*. This is clearly reflected in the manuscripts. The *VV* survives in around a dozen manuscripts, while the *VJ* only survives in a couple.¹⁵⁸ Krusch notes only two manuscripts containing the *VJ*, although I have discovered a new manuscript, from the fifteenth century, containing this work that was unknown to Krusch and to the Bollandists: Berlin, Staatsbibliothek-Preussischer Kulturbesitz, theol. Lat. qu. 141, fols. 140v–144r.¹⁵⁹ There are, in comparison, more than 185 manuscripts containing the *VC*.¹⁶⁰ But beyond the fact of its popularity, it is the *VC* that ultimately raises the more interesting questions about the audience for Jonas's hagiography.

Although to my knowledge no manuscript of the *VC* survives from the seventh and eighth centuries, we can nevertheless trace to some degree its influence and dissemination from a number of works written in Merovingian Gaul during this period. These are the *Chronicle of Fredegar*, compiled around 660; the *Vita Germani abbatis Grandivallensis* from c. 675; the *Passio Praeiectionis* from c. 676; the *Vita Sadalbergae abbatisae Laudunensis* from c. 680; and the *Vita Wandregiseli abbatis Fontanellensis* from c. 700. Apart from one of these texts, Bobolenus's *Vita Germani*, the authors are unknown. All of the authors were contemporaries of the individuals they wrote about, and many of them knew their subjects personally. The places or areas in which the texts were written can be established for the most part, although this is considerably more problematic when it comes to Fredegar.

These texts are important witnesses to the early dissemination of the *VC* in Merovingian Gaul.¹⁶¹ Although one commentator has interpreted this evidence as indicating that the *VC* was not widely disseminated, the opposite could also be said.¹⁶² The use of the *VC* in five texts that were written in different parts

156. *VC* 1.19: 188.

157. See *VJ* 9: 334–335.

158. For a list of these manuscripts, see Krusch 1905, xi–xii.

159. O'Hara 2011–2012, which also notes two new manuscript witnesses relating to the writings of Columbanus.

160. Based on the list I have compiled and the ongoing research of Alain Dubreucq, who has identified additional manuscripts in preparing a new edition of the *VC* for the Sources Chrétiennes.

161. See O'Hara 2009c.

162. Wood 1982, 69; 1994c, 247–248.

of Merovingian Gaul within sixty years of Jonas's writing shows a more rapid and wider dissemination of the text than has been acknowledged. This is unsurprising, given the Columbanian network of monasteries that were scattered throughout the kingdom and the close royal, aristocratic, and ecclesiastical affinities cultivated by the Columbanian *familia*.

It has also been proposed that the VC would have been mainly circulated within monastic circles.¹⁶³ This view can also be qualified, as it fails to take into consideration the nature of the monastic milieu of which the *Vita* is a product. The network of affinities with secular and ecclesiastical people of power—characteristic of Columbanian monasticism—must be taken into account when considering the dissemination of the work. It is misleading to think that only monks and nuns would have been interested in reading the *Vita*. For example, the first extant text to use the *Vita* (and the one that borrows from it the most) is not a hagiographical text but a work of history.

The compiler of the *Chronicle of Fredegar* was interested in the VC for what it told him about the dramatic circumstances that led to Columbanus's expulsion from the Burgundian kingdom in 610, hence its historical content. Ever on the lookout for a good story, Fredegar appreciated the dramatic qualities of Jonas's account of the saint's rift with Queen Brunhild and her grandson King Theuderic II (both d. 613) over issues relating to the king's sexual conduct and lay access to the inner confines of the monastic space. He inserted verbatim almost three chapters from Book 1 (chapters 18–20), with the exception of a number of miracle accounts.¹⁶⁴ Fredegar was not interested in Columbanus's miraculous powers, only in the saint's strained relationships with his royal benefactors. Although he himself was possibly an ecclesiastic who belonged to a Columbanian community or had close connections to the Columbanian *familia*,¹⁶⁵ the subject of his *Chronicle* was resolutely secular: "the deeds of kings and the wars of peoples."¹⁶⁶ A study of what we can tell about the compiler's political sympathies and what we can deduce about the reasons for its composition suggests that it may have been produced for the aristocratic audience of the Pippinids.¹⁶⁷ The substantial use of the VC in the *Chronicle* should therefore alert us to the danger of perceiving the *Vita* as a work that was confined to only a monastic audience. Indeed, the use of the work in what has been referred to as "the supreme political tract of the 660s"¹⁶⁸ can be taken as an illustration of the

163. Wood 1982, 69; 1994c, 247–248.

164. Fredegar 4.36: 23–29.

165. See Wood 1994a, 360.

166. Fredegar prologue: 2–3.

167. Wood 1994a, 359–366.

168. Wood 1994a, 366.

strong political connections that were initiated by Columbanus and continued by his Frankish disciples. Kings, queens, bishops, and nobles are all prominent in the VC, and we should consider the possibility that they, too, might have been part of the early audience for the work.

The aristocratic and ecclesiastical affinities of Columbanian monasticism can furthermore be seen from the remaining hagiographical texts that display textual influence from the VC. The *Vita Germani*, written by the priest Bobolenus for the community of Grandval, a monastery founded from Luxeuil in modern-day Switzerland, concerns Germanus, a Luxeuil monk who was given charge of the community by the abbot of Luxeuil, Waldebert, and was martyred when the local duke and his Alamannic mercenaries invaded the area. The *Vita* was dedicated to Deiculus, Leodemundus, and Ingofridus, the abbots of Lure, Grandval, and Luxeuil, respectively.¹⁶⁹ It has been suggested that Bobolenus wrote at Luxeuil rather than Grandval and that we cannot identify him with the fourth abbot of Bobbio of the same name.¹⁷⁰ The author shows familiarity with both books of the VC, borrowing a number of words and phrases from Book 1 and from the beginning of Book 2. The short opening prologue is taken almost verbatim from Jonas's dedicatory letter to the abbots of Luxeuil and Bobbio, even Jonas's grandiloquent salutation to the fathers.¹⁷¹

Another work, written around the same time but in the Auvergne, deals with Praejectus, bishop of Clermont, who was martyred in 676.¹⁷² The *Passio Praeiectionis* was written shortly after the bishop's death by an unknown author who possibly wrote in the monastery of Volvic or the convent of Chamalières.¹⁷³ He or she displays knowledge of both books of the VC, while in the prologue the hagiographer explicitly praises Jonas's work: "In living memory too the eloquent Jonas produced his very splendid life of St. Columbanus and his disciples Athalus, Eustasius, and Bertulf."¹⁷⁴ This is interesting evidence that already by c. 680, the *Vita* was being circulated in both its parts, Books 1 and 2, but that it was being selectively copied. The sections dealing with Athala, Eustasius, and Bertulf are found in Book 2, but the author makes no mention of the considerable

169. *Vita Germani* prologue: 33. All three dedicatees are referred to as "fathers" (*patribus*). Deiculus (a Latinized form of the Irish name Dícuil) would appear to be Irish given his name, and according to his later tenth-century *Vita*, he was considered to have been one of Columbanus's Irish monks; see *Vita Deicoli*.

170. See Krusch's comments in his edition of the *Vita Germani*, 28–29; Keller 1977, 8.

171. *Dominis eximiis et sacris culminibus decoratis relegionisque copia fultis*. *Vita Germani* prologue: 33.

172. On this politicized work of hagiography, see Fouracre 1990, 21–26; Fouracre and Gerberding 1996, 254–270.

173. Fouracre and Gerberding 1996, 257–260.

174. *Jonas etiam nostre memorie tempus vir eloquens vitam beati Columbani et discipulorum eius Athale, Eustasi et Bertulfi luculentissime edidit*. *Passio Praeiectionis* prologue: 225

section of twelve chapters also in Book 2 that concern the female community of Faremoutiers. Because Jonas mentions elsewhere in the *Vita* that he will discuss this community and its abbess, Burgundofara, we know that this was an integral part of the original text.¹⁷⁵ From the evidence of the *Passio Praeiectionis* and the manuscript transmission of the text, however, it would appear that the Faremoutiers section was often left out. The *Passio* mentions Praejectus's activities as a monastic founder in and around Clermont, including his foundation of the convent of Chamalières, which followed the mixed Rule of Benedict and Columbanus.¹⁷⁶

Both the VC and the *Passio Praeiectionis* influenced another saint's Life composed c. 680 by an anonymous author in the north of the kingdom, at Laon. The *Vita Sadalbergae*, concerning Sadalberga, the pious Frankish aristocrat and monastic founder of two communities for women at Langres and Laon, shows considerable textual influence from the VC.¹⁷⁷ This is perhaps not surprising, as Jonas mentions Sadalberga and her family, the Gundoinids, in the VC. Jonas relates that Eustasius, Columbanus's successor at Luxeuil, healed Sadalberga of her blindness when he was visiting the country estate of her father, Gundoin, which was close to the river Meuse.¹⁷⁸ The *Vita Sadalbergae*, written shortly after the saint's death, probably by a nun of St-Jean in Laon, was dedicated to Anstrude, Sadalberga's daughter and abbess of the community in Laon, and to Bishop Omatarius of Thérouanne.¹⁷⁹ The work seems to have been intended for both a monastic and a wider secular audience.¹⁸⁰ As the author borrows a number of phrases from the *Passio Praeiectionis*,¹⁸¹ composed only a few years previously in the Auvergne, the text shows the relative rapidity with which texts could be circulated within Merovingian Gaul. The text, again, shows evidence that both Books of the VC were disseminated together, as the author has copied out verbatim whole passages from Books 1 and 2. The author had a good knowledge of the narrative outline of the VC and, like the author of the *Passio Praeiectionis*, specifically mentions Jonas:

But, though we have made mention of that great man Columbanus, it is unnecessary to weave his deeds into our work. For the most eloquent man Jonas, as he was burning the midnight oil, already showed how, amidst

175. VC 1.26: 209; 2.7: 243.

176. *Passio Praeiectionis* 15: 235.

177. See Hummer 2003; Tatum 2007, 3–109.

178. VC 2.8: 244–245.

179. *Vita Sadalbergae*: 49.

180. See Tatum 2007, 75.

181. *Vita Sadalbergae*: 49–50.

the tumults of the world in King Theuderic's reign, he suffered the sly treachery of nefarious enemies instigated by Queen Brunhild; how he was driven from his brethren by that reckless tyranny and went into Italy and built the monastery of Bobbio by permission and authority of Agilulf, king of the Lombards and gave a rule to the monks. Jonas published all that in the book of the life and miracles which proceeded from his pen.¹⁸²

Clearly, not only was the VC well known, but so was its author, who was lauded, as in the *Passio Praeiectionis*, as *eloquentissimus*. Even more noteworthy, however, is the author's knowledge of Columbanus's letters, hitherto unnoticed by Columbanian scholars.¹⁸³ Not only is this important evidence for the circulation of Columbanus's writings, but it also indicates a shared veneration for Columbanus that linked in terms of cult such distant monasteries as Luxeuil, Laon, and Bobbio.

The *Vita Sadalbergae* furthermore provides valuable information on an important correction in the VC, namely, the insertion of Childebert replacing Sigibert as the name of the king who provided Columbanus with the site of Annegray, the saint's first monastic foundation.¹⁸⁴ Columbanus's initial royal patron in Merovingian Gaul was most likely King Guntram, followed by his successor, Childebert II (575–596), son of Sigibert I and Brunhild,¹⁸⁵ yet Jonas appears to have deliberately obscured this fact. Jonas names Sigibert, Childebert's father, as the king who first provided protection and patronage to Columbanus and in so doing has caused some confusion in the dating of Columbanus's *peregrinatio* to the Continent.¹⁸⁶ However, independently of Jonas, we can date Columbanus's arrival in the Vosges to around 591 from one of the saint's own letters.¹⁸⁷ The suppression of Childebert's role in the founding of the early Columbanian communities appears to be linked to the *damnatio memoriae* of Brunhild and her family, which took place following 613 when Chlothar II's rival branch of the Merovingian family assumed the sole rulership of the Merovingian kingdoms. The reason for Jonas's significant omission

182. *Sed quoniam tanti viri Columbanus fecimus mentionem, eius non est necessarium nostro operi texere gesta, cum sint ab eloquentissimo viro Iona elucubrate edita, quales etiam inter turbines saeculi et Theoderici Regis principatum, regina Brunechilde instigante, versutas nefandi hostis pertulerit insidias; quomodo etiam tyrannica temeritate a fratribus sit eiectus et Italiae fines ingressus, monasterium Bobiense ex permissu et auctoritate Agilulfi Langobardorum regis miro opere construxit regulamque condiderit monachorum, isdem praefatus Ionas in libro, quem de vita et miraculis eius edidit, suo stilo prosequitur: Vita Sadalbergae 2: 51 (McNamara translation, 180).*

183. *Vita Sadalbergae* 2: 51–52.

184. VC 1.6: 162–163.

185. See Wood 1994c, 195.

186. See, e.g., O'Carroll 1957.

187. *Ep.* 2.6: 17.

therefore lies in the political climate of the 640s, as Wood has made clear.¹⁸⁸ The author of the *Vita Sadalbergae*, however, credits the foundation of Luxeuil to the joint efforts of Childebert and Columbanus: “the monastery of Luxeuil in the wilderness of the Vosges which had been built through King Childebert’s munificence with the greatest care and labor by a man of laudable fame and mighty sanctity, Columbanus, a pilgrim come out of Ireland.”¹⁸⁹ The correction of Childebert replacing Sigibert also occurs in the A 3 group of manuscripts of the VC, including one of the oldest extant manuscripts, Metz, Grand Séminaire, 1, which was produced in the scriptorium of St Mihiel in the second half of the ninth century and which was unknown to Krusch for his 1902 and 1905 editions. The author of the *Vita Sadalbergae* may have had access to evidence (from Gregory of Tours or Fredegar) that Sigibert was killed in 575, long before Columbanus’s arrival, and therefore corrected Sigibert to Childebert, which in turn influenced the A 3 branch of the manuscript tradition of the VC.

The *Vita Wandregiseli*, written in the monastery of Fontanella/St. Wandrille around the turn of the eighth century,¹⁹⁰ is the last of the early works to show textual influence from the VC. It was written by a monk of Fontanella, a monastery in the extreme north of the kingdom near the English Channel, and concerns the monastery’s founder, Wandregisel, a Frankish aristocrat who had served at the court of King Dagobert I and, like many aristocrats during this period, had been attracted to the austerities of Columbanian monasticism. The author, who knew his subject personally and who wrote for the monastic community at Fontanella, describes the aristocrat’s conversion to the ascetic way of life and his foundation, with the support of Bishop Audoin of Rouen, of a monastic community at Fontanella on royal land. Although the *Vita Wandregiseli* displays less textual influence from Jonas’s VC than the other works mentioned, it is nevertheless an important witness to the dissemination of the VC in the north of the kingdom.

The Bobbio community initiated the production of the VC, but it was clearly meant to be read by the wider Columbanian *familia*, and this is reflected in the early texts where influence from the VC can be detected. It is important to emphasize the extent of the monastic and political milieus in which Jonas and his abbatial/episcopal/monastic contemporaries operated and, accordingly, what this reveals about the potential audience for the *Vita*. As Yaniv Fox has expertly

188. Wood 1994c, 196.

189. *ex Luxovio monasterio in Vosago saltu sito, quem vir fama laudabilis et sanctitate pollens Columbanus peregrinus ex Hibernia adveniens, ex munificentia Childeberti regis summo studio et labore construxit. Vita Sadalbergae* 1: 51 (McNamara translation: 180).

190. On the authorship and dating of this work, see Krusch’s comments in his edition of the *Vita Wandregiseli*, 3.

traced, the Columbanian monastic network was extensive and closely bound up with aristocratic and royal circles; the patrons of the new monasticism included the Merovingian royal family, the leading bishops, and the Frankish nobility.

Bishops such as Burgundofaro of Meaux, Chagnoald of Laon, and Audoin/Dado of Rouen were powerful benefactors with close personal connections to Columbanian communities, so it is probable that they were part of the audience of those who first read the VC. Although Jonas was anxious not to praise people who were still living, lest he appear a sycophant, he was not reticent about name-dropping. He was particularly assiduous in noting important individuals who had been Columbanian monks before becoming bishops and/or who as bishops had established new monastic foundations. Donatus of Besançon, an aristocratic monk, bishop, and monastic founder, was one example. Jonas further mentions the bishops Chagnoald of Laon; Acharius of Vermandois, Noyon, and Tournai; Ragnachar of Augst and Basel; and Audomar of Boulogne and Thérouanne as having been trained under Abbot Eustasius of Luxeuil (d. 629)¹⁹¹ but without mentioning that they were monastic founders.

Others who were not former Luxeuil monks but who supported or founded Columbanian communities are also mentioned. Bishop Eligius of Noyon, a close friend of Audoin's from their days together at the royal court in Paris, is singled out as the founder of Solignac in Aquitaine and of many other monasteries in the Limoges area (*et alia multa hisdem locis coenubia*), as well as a convent in Paris which, like Solignac, received royal support.¹⁹² Eligius was a talented goldsmith from Limoges who had risen to become a diplomat and adviser at the courts of Chlothar II and Dagobert I. His founding of Solignac in 632, when he was still in royal service, is an excellent example of the close interrelationship between the Merovingian court and the Columbanian communities. The monastery, on the site of a Gallo-Roman villa that was donated by Dagobert to Eligius for his foundation, was subject only to the king, while its first abbot, Remaclus, was a monk from Luxeuil.¹⁹³ The new spirit of lay piety also influenced Berthoara, a Frankish noblewoman, who built a convent (*ex beati Columbani regulam*) in the town of Bourges,¹⁹⁴ and Theudulfus, "nicknamed Babelenus," who built four communities, two of which were convents, in the same diocese.¹⁹⁵ Such examples show that Jonas was concerned with recording the expansion of Columbanian monasteries and with their benefactors, all of whom he is careful

191. VC 2.8: 245.

192. VC 2.10: 255.

193. Prinz 1965, 133.

194. VC 2.10: 255–256.

195. VC 2.10: 256.

to name. One aim of the VC might thus have been to give far-flung communities such as Fontanella/St. Wandrille, Solignac, and those around Bourges a sense of identity in common with the principal Columbanian foundations.

During this period, saints' Lives, such as the VC, circulated not only in monastic and ecclesiastical circles but also among the aristocracy and were tools of education for them.¹⁹⁶ This was the group from which the vast majority of the subjects of these saints' Lives had come, and so it was natural that such texts should serve to heighten the religious and social prestige of these aristocratic families while inculcating them with a Christian monastic value system that was tied to the service of the crown. Monasteries also functioned as schools for the elite, as Jonas mentions was the case at Luxeuil, and the Paris court school was a magnet for the sons of the aristocracy throughout Gaul where they were educated and trained for future royal service. It was in such places that Jonas's hagiography was likely to have been read or recited. The dramatic and humorous beer miracles of Columbanus and Vedast, in which they destroy vast beer vats in semipagan feasting rituals were probably intended as moral tales on the dangers of alcohol for the young aristocrats at court. Even Warnachar, the aristocratic Burgundian mayor of the palace who was opposed to Eustasius and whose death Jonas mentions prior to the Synod of Mâcon in 626/627, offered hagiographic advice to a bishop of Paris whose collection of *gesta sanctorum* he was familiar with.¹⁹⁷ The tendency of the Gallo-Roman and Frankish aristocracy to celebrate members of their own families who had become saints has been aptly characterized by Friedrich Prinz as a "self-sanctification" (*Selbstheiligung*) of the nobility.¹⁹⁸ With the close connections that the Columbanian communities had to aristocratic families, it is likely that the VC also circulated within this lay group. Jonas was writing not just for those dedicated to the religious life but also for the "simple minds of the laity."¹⁹⁹

This laity, of course, could also include nonaristocrats. Saints' Lives were an important medium through which the Church sought to instruct and evangelize.²⁰⁰ They were especially useful as sources of exempla for preachers instructing the lay community at Mass or for missionaries in their efforts at spreading the gospel. As is apparent from the prefaces to many Merovingian saints' Lives, these texts were meant not only for the clerical elite but also to be

196. See van Uytanghe 1985, 57. The increasingly aristocratic nature of hagiographical writing, geared toward the aristocracy in particular, is highlighted in Heinzelmann 1973; Helvétius 2012a.

197. *Epistolae aevi Merovingici collectae* 14: 457. Noted in Fox 2014, 95.

198. Prinz 1973.

199. VJ preface: 326.

200. This public function of Merovingian hagiography is emphasized in van Uytanghe 1985. See Kreiner 2014b, 10–18, on hagiography as a medium targeted principally toward the elite.

heard by the common people.²⁰¹ This public function has been seen as an important aspect of Merovingian hagiography, while it has been argued that for the Carolingian period, the audience becomes decidedly more monastic and ecclesiastical as Latin becomes less and less understood by the common people and increasingly the preserve of the educated elite.²⁰²

While it is possible that Jonas's audience could have included the *rustici*, it is more probable that his hagiography was circulated predominantly among the elite. While the short VV was probably intended for liturgical reading to a congregation at Arras and for the Columbanian monk-bishops of Neustria, the VJ and the VC probably circulated among an exclusive group of readers. It is in the monastery, aristocratic household, cathedral, and royal court that the early audience of Jonas's hagiography should be located. These were the places that were the most closely interconnected with one another through a dense network of aristocratic affinities. The main hubs of this network were Luxeuil and the Neustrian court at Paris. The royal court in particular was important in its patronage of new Columbanian communities and as a center in which those sympathetic to the ideals of Columbanus had influence.²⁰³

Around this court, the monopoly of power in Merovingian Gaul focused after 613, when Chlothar II of Neustria had managed to annihilate his rivals and unite the kingdoms of Burgundy and Austrasia with his own. Jonas, unsurprisingly, saw Chlothar's victory as the result of divine punishment meted out to the Burgundian royal family because of their treatment of Columbanus.²⁰⁴ He also highlights Columbanus's support of Chlothar's rule through the saint's threefold prophecy that Chlothar would become king of his enemies' kingdoms.²⁰⁵ There is no doubt that the events of the early seventh century by which the Merovingian kingdoms became united under a sole ruler would have held particular importance for Chlothar's successors. They were also of interest to Jonas because of Columbanus's intimate entanglements with the key figures in these events: Brunhild, Theuderic, Theudebert, and Chlothar. The most dramatic parts of Book 1 are those that show Columbanus in action with these powerful rulers.

As Wood has discussed, Jonas's defamation of those who had initially supported Columbanus—Brunhild and the Burgundian royal family—can be seen in the political context as part of the new regime's propaganda in

201. See the major studies by Banniard 1992b; Van Acker 2007.

202. Heene 1989; see also van Egmond 1999.

203. See Rosenwein 2006; Hen 2007; Fox 2014.

204. VC 1.29: 220.

205. VC 1.24: 207–208.

demonizing its previous opponents.²⁰⁶ This is most apparent from what seems to be Jonas's deliberate obfuscation of the role played by the sons and grandsons of Brunhild in their patronage of the early Columbanian communities. The VC was written shortly after the death of Dagobert I (d. 639) during a royal minority in the Merovingian kingdom, when Aega, the Neustrian mayor of the palace, governed the kingdom on behalf of Dagobert's infant son, King Clovis II.²⁰⁷ This period in the minority of the new king may have been an uncertain one for the Columbanian communities which had enjoyed considerable support from both Chlothar II and Dagobert I. Now they were faced with an infant king in the power of an aristocrat who, by all accounts, does not appear to have shared the same sympathies toward the communities that the previous kings had. As Aega's power rose following Dagobert's death, both Audoin/Dado and Eligius left the royal court in order to pursue episcopal careers. They may have been competing for power at court with Aega, and when the latter was given the charge of Clovis and the kingdom on Dagobert's death, his rivals may well have thought it safer to become clerics. When Aega died a few years later, Jonas noted, his death had been divine punishment for his acts of aggression toward the Faremoutiers community. Jonas wrote that Aega had been hostile toward Faremoutiers, had violated its boundaries, and had oppressed the people living on its lands. Jonas attributes these acts of aggression to a need for vengeance on the part of Aega.²⁰⁸ Aega's hostility stemmed from a feud between the mayor and Burgundofara's family that culminated in the assassination of Burgundofara's brother, Chagnulf, the count of Meaux, by Aega's son-in-law.²⁰⁹ Dagobert's widow, Queen Nanthild, may have sought to curtail the growing influence of Burgundofara's family (the Faronids) in Neustria in the aftermath of her husband's death, and the appointment of Aega as mayor of the palace may have been one way of achieving this.²¹⁰

Fredegar is more sympathetic in his account of Aega, although he mentions that he had one bad quality: "He stood out among the other Neustrian magnates and excelled them all through his ability to act with decision and his instinct to consider before he acted. He was of noble birth and very wealthy. Moreover, he was careful to be just, was an able talker and was always ready with an answer; but generally he was blamed for a tendency to avarice."²¹¹

206. Wood 1994c, 195–196.

207. See Fredegar 4.79: 67.

208. *Erat enim adversarius monasterii Ega nomine, vir in saeculo sublimis, cui Dagobertus moriens filium Chlodoveum cum regno commendaverat. His ergo adversabatur supradicto coenubio terminosque violabat omnemque familiam eius circummanentem quacumque potuerat occasione persequabatur. Sed non diu coeptae pertinaciae potitus est vota, nam mox post promissa ultione percussus interiit.* VC 1.17: 269.

209. De Vogüé 1988b, 217 n. 5.

210. Fox 2014, 68; Le Jan 2001, 251.

211. Fredegar 4.80: 68.

A greedy magnate with considerable power was worrying for land-based monastic communities that had been generously endowed by previous rulers. Perhaps Jonas's emphasis on the inviolability of sacred space and what happened to rulers who were enemies of Columbanus and his disciples was intended to remind members of the current regime that they should be wary of infringing on the rights of the communities. Jonas may also have been eager to influence the young king, Clovis II, and to ensure that he would be as gracious to the community as his father and grandfather had been. The minority of Clovis II and the influence of Aega at court clearly posed concerns for the Columbanian *familia*. If Aega had been hostile toward the communities or sought to confiscate some of their lands, then the Columbanian communities might have understandably felt threatened and concerned about the negative influence such a man might have on his young charge. By emphasizing Columbanus's role in Chlothar II's coming to power and, conversely, what happened to those in power who had opposed Columbanus (the line of Sigibert and Brunhild) or who had not listened to his counsel, the VC sought to influence the contemporary ruling elite of Merovingian Gaul.

Jonas and Biblical Stylization

JONAS AND THE BIBLE

THE MOST IMPORTANT SOURCE FOR JONAS'S HAGIOGRAPHY WAS THE Bible. There are in total 116 biblical citations and allusions in Jonas's three saints' Lives. The vast majority, as one would expect, are found in the VC: eighty-eight in total, with fifty-two in Book 1 (sixteen quotations, thirty-six allusions) and thirty-six in Book 2 (twelve quotations, twenty-four allusions). The VJ has twenty-three (eighteen quotations, five allusions), while the short VV has five (all allusions). Jonas drew equally from both the Old and the New Testament; there are thirty-nine quotations from or allusions to the New Testament in Book 1 of the VC compared with forty-nine for the Old Testament, twelve quotations from or allusions to the New Testament in the VJ as compared with eleven for the Old Testament, and five New Testament citations as opposed to one from the Old Testament in the VV. The citations do not show that Jonas relied predominantly on Jerome's Vulgate, but he used a range of sources, the Vetus Latina and others, which was in keeping with the usage of the time when the Vulgate was gaining in popularity but had not yet superseded earlier versions of the Bible.¹ This is also in keeping with Merovingian lectionaries and liturgical sources from Luxeuil and Bobbio, which show acquaintance with Jerome's Vulgate for the Old Testament citations but use mixed or completely Old Latin versions, particularly for the New Testament.² Like Adomnán later in the seventh century, Jonas appears to have drawn on different versions of the Bible. Not surprisingly, most of his citations from the Old Testament are from the Psalms, which are predominantly from the Latin version translated from the Septuagint, although he also draws extensively from the Book of Kings. For the New Testament, he shows a marked predilection for Matthew, while Mark is rarely cited. Matthew had the further advantage of being the subject of Jerome's *Commentary*. This preference for Matthew is also seen in Columbanus and other Irish writers of the seventh century for whom the gospel of Matthew had a prominent position, while Mark was hardly ever quoted by Columbanus.³

1. Bogaert 2012: 74 notes that Jerome's Vulgate only becomes more prevalent from the period 600 to 750.

2. Salmon 1963.

3. Picard 1987, 249.

Jonas also cites often from Paul's letter to the Ephesians, a pattern that can also be traced in the *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines*—as indeed also with the predominance of Matthew citations. The extensive biblical citations and the pattern of biblical books used by the author of the *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines* match those of Jonas in his hagiography. Diem has suggested that Jonas may have known and used Pseudo-Jerome's *Commentary on the Psalms*, which appears to be an Irish pseudo-epigraphical work of exegesis, although I could trace no clear evidence knowledge of this work.⁴

These figures attest to Jonas's extensive use of the Bible and are comparable to other works of continental hagiography of the period. Gregory the Great used the Bible extensively in his *Dialogues*, while the earlier sixth-century *Life of the Jura Fathers* and the *Life of Caesarius* of Arles have seventy-four citations to the Bible each, slightly fewer than in Jonas's VC. The priest Florentius, the author of the much shorter though contemporary *Life of Rusticula*, also used the Bible extensively.⁵ Interestingly, this frequent citation of the Bible is not common in Insular hagiography of the seventh century, according to Jean-Michel Picard. By means of comparison, Adomnán of Iona's later seventh-century *Life of Columba*, which is similar in length to Jonas's VC, contains only eleven quotations and seven allusions to the Bible, while Sulpicius Severus's classic fourth-century *Life of Martin* stands out from continental hagiography for its noticeable lack of biblical citation (only ten).⁶ The seventh-century Irish *Life of Brigit* by Cogitosus and the *Lives* of Patrick by Muirchú and by Tirechán contain even fewer: three in Cogitosus, four in Muirchú, and none at all in Tirechán.⁷ In contrast, biblical quotations litter the works of Insular writers such as Patrick (119), Gildas (299), and Columbanus (321).⁸ Jonas is again similar to his hagiographical hero in his extensive use of the Bible.

Because of the numerous citations and allusions to the Bible in saints' Lives, the ways in which hagiographers used the Bible to communicate and emphasize their ideas can often be overlooked if they are seen merely as hagiographical conventions. This stylization, on the contrary, provides a window through which to view the works: "any attempt to read early medieval hagiographical works without taking into account the influence of biblical language, and the tradition of scriptural exegesis which accompanied it, can provide only a partial

4. Private communication with Albrecht Diem with regard to the *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines*. See Diem and Van der Meer 2016 for a German translation of the Rule with a helpful introduction. On Pseudo-Jerome's *Commentary on the Psalms*, which is edited in CCSL 72, see McNamara 2000, 49.

5. See *Vita Rusticulae sive Marciae abbatissae Arlelatensis*; see also Riché 1954.

6. Stancliffe 1983, 39.

7. Picard 1987, 246, 247 n. 10.

8. Picard 1987, 246 n. 5.

and unbalanced understanding of the genre. To strive for a discernment of the metaphorical and symbolic language of the hagiographer is to elevate those parts of a saint's Life—particularly the miracles—that have been so problematic for scholars in the past, to the positions of prominence intended by the original writers.”⁹ E. Ann Matter has also spoken of the Bible as a “co-text . . . the building block of literary meaning that must be understood as informing medieval literature, even if its role as a model is unspoken.”¹⁰ The Bible constituted a “literary arsenal” for the authors of saints' Lives, because the facts of biblical salvation history incited, oriented, and stimulated sanctity; to distinguish between sacred scripture and hagiography is perhaps unhelpful.¹¹ Saints' Lives were mini-continuations of the Bible in local contexts; they recorded God's continued intervention and action in historical time through the saints.¹² The study of the Bible's decisive influence on medieval hagiography was largely pioneered by francophone scholars such as Jean Leclercq, Baudouin de Gaiffier, and, most notably, Marc Van Uytfanghe.¹³ It has begun to receive more attention from German and anglophone scholars.¹⁴

For Jonas, the passage of time had not severed the events described in the Bible from the world in which his hagiographical heroes lived. Jonas viewed the events he was writing about largely through a biblical lens and firmly set them in a continuum with biblical history. The breadth of biblical material provided hagiographers with an expansive source base from which they could draw. They adapted the material to best complement their subjects, to emphasize, leave out, or indeed change the signification of a biblical passage by giving it a new contextual meaning. There was, accordingly, a constant interaction between the hagiographer and the Divine Word.

The many ways in which Jonas used the Bible thus provide an important angle for reading and understanding his hagiography. His selection of biblical citations and allusions can serve to reveal how he used scripture as a mode of communication and a way to imbue his narratives with authority. As monk, priest, and abbot, Jonas would have been steeped in the Bible through the daily round of the Divine Office, the celebration of the Eucharist, and his own

9. Duncan 2000, 399.

10. Matter 2003, 155.

11. Leclercq 1963, 112, 105.

12. Van Uytfanghe 1976, 105 (“chaque Vita sera donc une espèce de bible secondaire, une bible locale et contemporaine, pour ainsi dire “actualisée”).

13. Leclercq 1963; de Gaiffier 1970; Van Uytfanghe 1976, 1987, 1989; Van Egmond 1976.

14. See, among others, Von der Nahmer 2001; Matter 2003; Duncan 2000; Hen 1998 and the special issue of *Early Medieval Europe* 7; O'Loughlin 2012. I am grateful to Thomas O'Loughlin for sending me a copy of this book.

personal meditative reading and prayer of the Bible in the monastic tradition (*lectio divina*).¹⁵ As a priest and a missionary alongside Bishop Amandus, Jonas would have found the Bible an indispensable resource of instruction and inspiration. His reading of the Bible was characteristically monastic: simple and straightforward, tending toward a literal and rationalist reading over a more typological, allegorical method (I will return to this). His style was not that of a biblical scholar or exegete but that of a monk, a pastor, and a missionary in the field.

Hagiographers selected biblical passages and themes that best fitted the persons or scenarios they were writing about. They could use biblical citations to give emphasis to a particular point, to convey ideas, or to draw parallels between their hero or heroine and some biblical figure, all with the intention of presenting their subject in the best or worst possible light. Some thought lay behind what citations and allusions the hagiographer chose. This selection can potentially broaden our understanding of a text by drawing our attention to the recurrence of certain themes and concerns, to whatever things and ideas the hagiographer particularly wished to stress and convey through recourse to the Bible.

Jonas's unusual decision to divide the VC into two books—which, as already discussed, appears to have been taken on his own initiative—may have been inspired by Luke's gospel and the Acts of the Apostles (also attributed to Luke) as the structural template for the schema of the work.¹⁶ The Christological parallels between Jesus and Columbanus are made clear a number of times throughout Book 1, whereas the Acts of the Apostles, the history of the early Christian community, provided a model for extending the narrative to include Columbanus's disciples in the period after his death. Jonas's use of the word *discipuli* is an explicit allusion to Christ's disciples, being the Latin term used most often in the gospels for the apostles.¹⁷ And, as in the Acts of the Apostles, which also included the role of women in the early Christian community, Jonas could be inclusive of the women's community of Faremoutiers, which had a special relevance for him as the abbot and legislator for a female community.

Following the methodology employed by Van Uytvanghe, Jonas's use of the Bible can be categorized into roughly five groups, each of which served particular functions within the text. This is by no means meant to be a rigid

15. On the influence of the Bible on early medieval monks and their embodiment of the Bible, see Cochelin 2011.

16. Noted by Berschin 1988a, 28. On Luke-Acts in relation to ancient historiography and rhetoric, see Rothschild 2004; Sterling 1992.

17. Dijkstra 2016, 79.

categorization but rather to delineate the often subtle functions that a biblical quotation or allusion served within the text:

1. An implicit source of stylization (comparative function).
2. A source of moral and religious instruction (didactic function).
3. A source of moral and religious action (operative function).
4. A source of God's providential care (apologetic function).
5. A source of religious sentiment (demonstrative function).

Every biblical reference, whether explicit (a direct citation) or implicit (an allusion), may be categorized as belonging to one of these five groups. And each use of the Bible served a particular purpose or function within the text. By studying the concentration and variation of these types of biblical references throughout Jonas's hagiography, it is possible to determine shifting emphases within the texts. For example, Jonas's principal purpose in Book 1 of the VC was to revindicate Columbanus's reputation as an orthodox saint. It is therefore not surprising that the majority of biblical references in Book 1 were concerned with showing God's providential care and protection for this saint (they served an apologetic function). In Book 2, Jonas's principal purpose was to show the effects of dissent and disobedience that had plagued the communities in their recent history. Most of the biblical references in Book 2 accordingly express religious sentiments (they are demonstrative). This methodology is a heuristic tool that allows us to study the nuanced ways Jonas used the Bible as a mode of communication to give added authority, to instruct, or to emphasize particular points he wished to convey. In the following, I will discuss some examples from each category, before concluding with observations on Jonas's reading of and approach to the Bible in general.

The Bible As an Implicit Source of Stylization

The comparisons Jonas made between Queen Brunhild and the wicked Jezebel and between Agrestius and Cain, the thievish raven that stole Columbanus's glove alluding to the raven of Noah's ark, and the exiled starving community of monks in Alamannia who were miraculously fed with manna and quails like the Israelites of the Exodus were all attempts to frame the people and events he was writing about with a biblical sensibility. This ultimately served a comparative function, and in this sense, the Bible can be seen as an implicit source of stylization. Most of the references in this category were taken from the Old Testament, which provided a powerful model of a new Christian kingship for the secular rulers of Jonas's time.¹⁸

18. See Hen 1998.

The Book of Kings, in particular, played an important role in this regard. It provided a biblical model for the right relationship between kings and prophets and how the former should listen to and respect the latter. In the Book of Kings, the success or failure of the ruler depends entirely on fidelity to the precepts of the Lord. Columbanus is often cast in the guise of the prophets Elijah and Elisha, whom Columbanus also mentions in his letters. Elijah was a model of fidelity to the Lord under affliction. Columbanus is implicitly associated with Elijah, predominantly in those sections where he is persecuted and hounded out of Luxeuil by Theuderic and Brunhild. For the central chapters of Book 1 concerning Columbanus's breakdown in relations with Brunhild and Theuderic (chapters 18–20), the Book of Kings, with its accounts of the conflicts between prophets and the ancient kings of Israel, provided a biblical model on which to frame this central conflict between royal and divine authority. In this section, the allusions between Columbanus and the prophets Elijah and Elisha are subtly drawn, and Jonas's use of the Book of Kings is mainly restricted to this section of the work. It begins in chapter 18, when Jonas famously refers to Brunhild as a "second Jezebel," alluding to the Phoenician princess who married Ahab, king of northern Israel. She turned Ahab from the worship of the Jewish God to that of the Phoenician god Baal. She had many Jewish prophets killed and also came into conflict with the prophet Elijah and his successor Elisha, who anointed one of his servants, Jehu, to overthrow the house of Ahab.

Later, for when Columbanus has escaped from imprisonment in Besançon and returned to Luxeuil, Jonas modeled his second arrest on that of the prophet Elisha. When the soldiers arrived at the monastery to search for Columbanus, they could not see him: "So the soldiers arrive with their tribune and search the monastic confines looking for the man of God. He was in fact sitting in the atrium of the church reading a book. The soldiers entered the place many times and passed so close to him that some kicked his feet and others brushed against his clothes, but they did not see him because their eyes were blinded. It was a most beautiful sight. Columbanus, rejoicing, saw them searching for him while he remained invisible. While they could be seen, they could not see him who was sitting in the midst of them."¹⁹ This is a good example of Jonas's use of the historic present and a scenic style to heighten the narrative effect. While the soldiers were blinded to Columbanus's presence among them, it was revealed to a righteous tribune, who realized the power of the saint and ordered his men to depart. This story has parallels with that of Elisha in 2 Kings 6 and with similar accounts in Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* (1.2 and 2.31) concerning

19. VC 1.20 (O'Hara and Wood 2017, 140).

Libertinus and Benedict. When Brunhild and Theuderic then sent another cohort of soldiers to arrest Columbanus, this time the soldiers pleaded with the saint to comply with their commander's wishes that he accompany them. The men were desperate: "The men, caught between two different fears, with terror urging them on from every side, grab the stole he was wearing. Some throw themselves on their knees and tearfully beg him to absolve them of blame for this criminal offence: they were only following the king's orders."²⁰ Jonas here closely models the scene on the arrest of the prophet Elisha in 2 Kings 1: 13–14, where the captain of the soldiers falls at the feet of the prophet, beseeching him to spare his life and the lives of his men.

The three prophecies made by Columbanus in relation to Chlothar's unification of the three kingdoms (which were to be accomplished within three years—three being the number of divine perfection in the Bible and symbolizing the completeness of time and its divine origin as revelation)²¹ also ties in with Jonas's use of the Book of Kings, for it portrays Columbanus as Elisha to Chlothar's Jehu; even the punishment inflicted on Brunhild, being torn by wild horses, is reminiscent of Jehu's men's horses trampling Jezebel's corpse (*et equorum ungulae qui concalcaverunt eam*; 2 Kings 9: 33) and is contrasted with the new political regime which will uphold the right relations between kings and prophets. In the new pluralistic post-Roman world of barbarian *gentes* and their kings, the lessons and template of the Book of Kings was also attractive for Gregory the Great.²² Early medieval manuscripts from the Bobbio library containing the Book of Kings and the Vetus Latina version survive (CLA 3.344 a–b; CLA 4.389).

Prophecy plays an important role in Book 1, where on three different occasions following his banishment from Luxeuil, Columbanus acts like an Old Testament prophet when he prophesies that Theuderic II and his family will be destroyed and Chlothar II, the just king, will emerge the victor in the violent power struggles among the Merovingian dynasty. From the perspective of the 640s, this is clearly political propaganda meant not only to curry favor with the current Neustrian regime during the minority of Clovis II (a time of uncertainty for the realm) but also to stress that the Merovingian polity still has allegiances to the *familia* of Columbanus; the king and court must heed their prophets, the religious purists of Jonas's monastic coterie.

One of the most interesting scenes in this regard, and a good example of Jonas's skill as a storyteller, concerns Theuderic's final defeat of his half-brother

20. VC 1.20 (O'Hara and Wood 2017, 141–142).

21. The three prophecies are recorded in VC 1.20, 1.22, 1.24.

22. Cracco Ruggini and Cracco 2009.

Theudebert at the battle of Zulpich in 612. Columbanus and his noble Frankish attendant Chagnoald (a member of the powerful Faronid clan and later bishop of Laon) are in the wilderness of Alamannia at the time of the battle, when Columbanus falls asleep and sees the battle raging fiercely between the two kings. When he wakes, he tells Chagnoald what is happening, and his assistant enthusiastically urges him to pray for Theuderic's defeat. Columbanus follows Christ's teaching (Matthew 5: 44) and indignantly replies, "You give stupid advice and contrary to religion. For the Lord did not wish it so who asked us to pray for our enemies."²³ God, he said, had already decided the fate of the battle. This is a far cry from Columbanus's namesake, Columba of Iona, who is said to have hurriedly summoned his community to pray for the victory of the Dalriadan king, Áedán mac Gabráin, against a tribe known as the Miathi.²⁴ In this case, however, Columbanus remains above the fray and mourns the loss of life, while his more partisan assistant wanted him to influence the outcome of the battle. The detail and stylization of this scene are noteworthy, because Jonas tells us that Columbanus experienced this revelation while "sitting on the trunk of a rotten oak reading a book" (*supra querqui putrefactam truncum vir Dei librum legens resedebat*).²⁵ This is a powerful image, and the level of specificity and detail is perhaps significant. Jonas may be alluding here to Isaiah 1: 28–31: "Rebels and sinners together will be shattered, and those who abandon the Lord will perish. Yes, you will be ashamed of the oaks which give you such pleasure: you will blush for the gardens that charm you. Since you will be like an oak with faded leaves, like a garden without water. The man of high estate will be tinder, his handiwork a spark. Both will burn together and no one put them out." In his *Commentary on Isaiah*, a copy of which was available in the early Bobbio library (now Ambrosiana S.45 SUP (CLA 3.365), Jerome links this passage to the arid fig tree of Matthew 21: 19, symbolic of dried-up sinners who are no longer sustained by the *scientia scripturarum* and of those who have turned away from the Lord.²⁶ In the context of our story, immediately prior to the battle, Columbanus had suggested to Theudebert that he become a cleric and so avoid conflict with his half-brother, but "The king and his companions laugh at this; they had never heard of a Merovingian on the throne who had voluntarily become a cleric."²⁷ Following his defeat, he would be forcefully tonsured and then ignominiously murdered on the orders of his grandmother Brunhild.

23. VC 1.28: 219.

24. Adomnán, *Life of Columba* 1.8: 119.

25. VC 1.28: 218.

26. Jerome, *Commentariorum in Esaiam*: 25–26.

27. VC 1.28.

In the early medieval world, the oak was a symbol of strength and kingship.²⁸ In early medieval Ireland, sacred trees were linked to dynasties, and destroying a rival dynasty's sacred tree was seen as a violent attack. The different species of trees were classified, and the oak (Old Irish *daur*) was prized for its dignity and known as the *temair fedo* ("Tara of the wood"), referring to the royal inauguration site of the high kings at Tara. While we do not know whether the oak had similar connotations in Merovingian society, Jonas may have wished to symbolize Theudebert and his royal family with the rotten oak that has been brought low by the truth of Columbanus's prophecy grounded in his total fidelity to the word of God (his reading of the book while sitting on the felled oak). It is ultimately an image of vindication, of triumph. However, while the imagery of the rotten oak trunk may suggest that Jonas was influenced by a biblical framework, the combination of the specific words used by Jonas (*quercus* and *putrefactus*) is not found in the Bible or in any other patristic commentary or early medieval source. They are unique to Jonas and serve as a good example of his skill as a storyteller.

The associations with Christ and the Old Testament prophets are more explicitly drawn out in the two remarkable hymns that Jonas appended to Book 1. They appear to have been sent on two separate occasions after he had finished writing Book 1. In contrast to the rotten oak associated with the demise of King Theudebert, Columbanus in the first hymn, which was composed to be sung in the refectory on Columbanus's feast day, is likened to a rich olive tree producing oil, as well as a fruitful cedar and a palm tree, an allusion to Psalm 91: 12: "The just shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow up like the cedar of Lebanon." The orthodoxy of Columbanus's foundations are emphasized by reference to the rock of Christ: "You have built a house set upon rock / Which supported the entire mass of created things. / And someone placed on top of this rock remains steadfast forever."²⁹ Christ is the cornerstone (*lapis angularis*), and in listing the twelve exotic gemstones, Jonas alludes to the image of the heavenly Jerusalem of Revelation 21: 18–21 that will be manifested at the end of time.³⁰ This eschatological perspective is also apparent in Jonas's reference to the Ages of Gold, Silver, Bronze, Iron, and Clay of the Book of Daniel (2: 32–40) signifying the decline of the world, whereby each age is represented by a different world civilization, a view that is also evident in Fredeggar, writing slight later than Jonas

28. Ellis Davidson 1988, 170, 179. On the role and classification of sacred trees in early medieval Ireland, see DiPietro 2013; Kelly 1976. I am very grateful to Jaqueline Bemmer for these references.

29. *Aedificasti domum petra supra insertam / Quae molem omnem rerum firmavit conditarum. / Quam supra quis positus manet firmus in eva. VC, Versus ad mensam canendi*, ll. 29–31: 225.

30. *VC, Versus ad mensam canendi*, ll. 32–36: 226.

but in reference to the declining power of the Merovingian kings.³¹ This sense of decline and the approaching end of time is the only intimation we find in all of Jonas's hagiography, which otherwise does not display this sense of the Last Days, as we find briefly in Columbanus's writings and much more extensively in Gregory the Great.

In his second hymn to Columbanus, Jonas displays an impressive knowledge of Classical figures from antiquity, and his reference to the "golden head of the Persians, Babylon, / The silver Darius the ancient Mede" points to his reliance on Jerome's *Commentary on Daniel* here, as Jerome associates the Persians with the Medes.³² Jerome was the patristic authority most admired and read by Columbanus (much more so than Augustine), and his influence can also be traced in his hagiographer.³³ Jerome was a revered authority in Irish exegesis, while it is noteworthy that both Columbanus and Jonas show a marked lack of interest in Augustine.³⁴

The Bible As a Source of Moral and Religious Instruction

Humility was the principal virtue of the good monk, and it is unsurprising that Jonas chose to stress it most in this category of biblical stylization. Chapter 5 of Book 1 reads like a mini-rule and eulogizes the virtues of Columbanus and his monks.³⁵ Humility is the first virtue for which Jonas praises them, before their piety, mercifulness, unity of spirit, modesty, and sobriety. The preeminence of humility also merited two biblical citations. Columbanus was so humble, Jonas wrote, that "just as men try to seek authority from worldly honours, so vice versa did he with his companions struggle to surpass each other in their devotion to humility, remembering His command, 'Who humbles himself shall be exalted,' and that saying of Isaiah, 'To whom shall I look if not to the humble and quiet man who trembles when I speak?'"³⁶ The first citation (Luke 14: 11) is similar to that of the Vulgate, but the second (Isaiah 66: 2) is not. The latter, however, does appear in one of Columbanus's sermons and, according to G. S. M. Walker, is a form peculiar to Columbanus.³⁷ This implies that Jonas got the

31. Fredegar 3.12, on Basina's dream and on the Merovingian kings as lions and so on, reflecting a similar view of decline.

32. *Non aureum caput Babylona Persarum, / Argenteus Darius Medus habuit priscus. VC, Versus ad mensam canendi*, ll. 11–12: 225. See Jerome, *Commentariorum in Daniele* 3.9.1: 860. Noted by de Vogüé 1988b, 169 n. 5.

33. Walker 1970a, lxviii, on Jerome's influence on Columbanus, also seen in the Patristic Index on 221.

34. Herren 2005, 66. For a survey of Irish biblical exegesis, see also McNamara 1996a.

35. VC 1.5 reads like a short outline of the monastic ideals and practices in Columbanus's community which can also be seen in expanded form in Jonas's *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines*.

36. VC 1.5: 161.

37. Columbanus, *Instructio* 2.2: 70, in SCO.

citation indirectly from reading this sermon or that he used the same version of the text as Columbanus.

The best example of this instructive use of the Bible is when Jonas chose a series of biblical allusions to illustrate how the wiles of women corrupted some of the great figures of the Old Testament. It was also a salient message for the Frankish kings who had been criticized for their *luxuria* and love of women; both Clovis II's father (Dagobert) and his grandfather (Chlothar II) had been noted for their womanizing, as indeed would the young king.³⁸ In Columbanus's case, Jonas recounts that shortly after the young Columbanus had realized that the devil was tempting him with "the loves of lustful girls, whose beauty (a passing beauty) is in the particular habit of plunging the minds of wretched men into a dreadful desire,"³⁹ he encountered an anchoress whom he asked for advice on how he could best prevent such temptations. What the anchoress did was to reel off a litany of biblical femmes fatales: "Do you not recall that Adam fell through the persuasion of Eve, that Samson was seduced by Delilah, that David was turned from his former righteousness by the beauty of Bathsheba, and that the most wise Solomon was led astray by the love of women? Flee, young man, flee! Escape damnation into which, as you know, many have fallen. Forsake the way that leads to the gates of Hell!"⁴⁰

These allusions to Genesis 3: 6, Judges 16: 19, 2 Samuel 11: 2–27, and 1 Kings 11: 1–8, were, according to Jonas, the emotive words that launched Columbanus's religious career. Following this encounter, Columbanus left his friends and his mother for good after a dramatic scene. Jonas writes:

His mother, overcome with sorrow, pleads with him not to leave. But he replies, "Have you not heard: He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me?"⁴¹ He begs his mother, who is blocking his way and clinging to the doorway, to let him go. She, wailing and lying prostrate on the floor, refuses. Columbanus then jumps across both his mother and the entrance and begs his mother to be happy. He would never see her again in this life, but would follow wherever the way of salvation leads.⁴²

This harsh anecdote may have been inspired by one of Jerome's letters (*Ep.* 14.2) in which he reproaches Heliodorus for leaving the ascetic life and encourages him again to leave his family home: "Should your little nephew hang on your

38. *Liber Historiae Francorum* 44.

39. *VC* 1.3: 156.

40. *VC* 1.3: 157 (O'Hara and Wood 2017, 100).

41. Matthew 10: 37.

42. *VC* 1.3 (O'Hara and Wood 2017, 100–101).

neck, pay no regard to him; should your mother with ashes on her hair and garments rent, show you the breasts at which she nursed you, heed her not; should your father prostrate himself on the threshold, trample him under foot and go your way.” Columbanus revered the works of Jerome, and copies of his letters, including the eighth-century Bobbio manuscript, now Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, 954 (CLA 10: 1492), were to be found in the Bobbio library in the Lombard period. According to Jonas, Columbanus heeded Jerome’s advice, cut all ties with his family, and set off for further study in the Bible with a scriptural scholar. This testimony was important for Jonas (who also wrote about his own mother’s frustrated wishes to see him and how he almost died when his abbot allowed him to return briefly to his hometown). Jonas was concerned to minimize family influence and contact in female communities (explicitly stated in his *Regula ad virgines* and in the Faremoutiers section of Book 2).

Monastic attitudes toward women were by no means peculiar to Columbanus and Jonas, although a short poem is attributed to Columbanus warning about the dangers of women: “Let everyone who is dutiful in mind avoid the deadly poison / That the proud tongue of an evil woman has. / Woman destroyed life’s gathered crown; But woman gave long-lasting joys of life.”⁴³ While comparisons and contrasts between Eve and Mary were commonplace in Christian writings, Columbanus in his *RCoen.* also stipulated that if a monk even spoke to a woman without witnesses being present, he should remain without food (presumably for a day), subsist on bread and water for two days, or receive two hundred lashes.⁴⁴ Jonas was conveying this sentiment found in the Rules from the perspective of the saint’s own experience. The Bible backed it up.

The Bible As a Source of Moral and Religious Action

The decisive meeting with the anchoress and Columbanus’s subsequent reaction also provide two examples of another way Jonas used the Bible. When Columbanus came to the anchoress, she described her solitary vocation in military terms and said that in the fifteen years she had been in her place of pilgrimage, she had never wavered in her purpose. She described this religious perseverance in metaphorical terms: once she had taken hold of the plow, she never looked back.⁴⁵ This is an allusion to Luke 9: 62, where in response to a man who wishes to become his disciple only after he has said goodbye to his

43. Columbanus, *In Mulieres*, in Walker 1970a, 215. On its authorship as the work of Columbanus, see Schaller 1997, 250–251. On the influence of women on the career of Columbanus, see Johnston forthcoming.

44. *RCoen.* 15: 164.

45. *VC* 1.3: 156.

family, Christ says, "Once the hand is laid on the plow, no one who looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." In addition to the anchoress's allusion to the pericope of Luke, Jonas reports that when Columbanus had resolved to leave home, his mother begged him not to and even barred his exit from the house. In response, Columbanus cited Matthew 10: 37: "have you not heard that, 'Who loves one's father or mother more than me is not worthy of me'?" and then leaped over his prostrate mother, who was begging him not to leave.⁴⁶ Both biblical allusions are again instructive, but they are more than that. The actions of the protagonists are seen as having been directly influenced by the Bible. While the citation of Matthew is didactic as far as it is telling the reader that he must sacrifice everything in order to follow Christ, it is also given as the textual influence behind Columbanus's decision to leave home. This use of the Bible might be characterized as active. The text of the Bible has an operative effect on the protagonists, and the actions Jonas describes are the results of this stimulus.

A good example of this can be found in the following chapter, where God's command to Abraham in Genesis 12: 1 to leave his land and family for another land which he would show him is cited as having influenced Columbanus's decision to leave Ireland.⁴⁷ Similarly, his actions in refusing King Theuderic's royal largesse at the villa of Époisses, where he had gone to protest the actions Brunhild and her grandson had taken against the community, were explained by citing Ecclesiastes 34: 23: "The Most High rejects the gifts of the impious." Columbanus added that it was unacceptable that "the mouths of the servants of God be polluted by his food who denies to the servants of God not only access to their own homes, but also to the homes of others."⁴⁸ He himself quotes this biblical passage as the reason for not accepting the king's hospitality.

The Bible can be seen as a source of moral and religious action again in the same chapter, when, following Christ's example (John 13: 4–5), Columbanus washes and dries the feet of condemned criminals in a prison in Besançon after freeing them from their chains.⁴⁹

This kind of use of the Bible is much less frequent in Book 2. One example occurs in 2.9, when Abbot Eustasius, in defending Columbanus's practices against the accusations of the renegade Agrestius, reveals two common customs that were inspired by the Bible. Agrestius had complained about a number of things that he argued were unnecessary and against canonical practice. One such complaint was that a monk had to seek a blessing

46. VC 1.3: 157.

47. VC 1.4: 159.

48. VC 1.19: 189.

49. VC 1.19: 192.

whenever he entered or left a building within the monastery.⁵⁰ This practice is to be found in the *RCoen.*, which ordains twelve blows for anyone who failed on leaving a house to seek a blessing, to sign himself with the cross, and then to approach the cross,⁵¹ while fifty blows was the penalty if he did not seek a prayer on entering.⁵² From Jonas, we know that the words used for this blessing were from Psalm 120: 7–8.⁵³ Abbot Eustasius defended this practice by saying that when “a monk enters or leaves the cell I think it right that he be strengthened with the blessing of the Lord according to the voice of the Psalmist: ‘The Lord keep you safe from all evil; may the Lord protect your soul. Let the Lord watch over your coming and your going from this moment and forever.’”⁵⁴ This, he conceded, referred to every Christian who was strengthened with baptism in the Church and persevered in the faith until death, but he also argued for its applicability in everyday life (*cotidianum motum*): “whether on entering, leaving, or at the outset of a journey, I consider it correct that each one of our companions be armed with the sign of the cross and be reinforced with a blessing.”⁵⁵ Agrestius also condemned the more elaborate way the Columbanian communities celebrated the Mass with extra prayers and thought that they “should be detested as though they were heretical traditions, as their author should be.”⁵⁶ This constant praying stipulated by Columbanus in the *RM* was again defended by Eustasius with the teaching of the Bible. Christ instructed the apostles in Matthew 26: 41, “Stay awake and pray, so that you may not enter into temptation,” while Saint Paul (Thessalonians 5: 17) urged that one should pray constantly.⁵⁷ This provided the scriptural basis for the practice,⁵⁸ for, as Eustasius argued, “nothing is so useful and so healthful than to beat the Creator with a multiplication of prayers and in the repetition of lengthy prayers.”⁵⁹ These biblical citations and allusions, although they could also be instructive, were primarily employed by Jonas to show the effect they had on the actions and motivations of the subjects he was writing about.

50. *VC* 2.9: 249–250.

51. *RCoen.* 3: 146–148.

52. *RCoen.* 14: 162.

53. *VC* 2.9: 250.

54. *VC* 2.9: 250.

55. *VC* 2.9: 250.

56. *VC* 2.9: 250.

57. *VC* 2.9: 251.

58. *RM* 7: 130.

59. *VC* 2.9: 251.

The Bible As a Source of God's Providential Care

The most important use of the Bible for Jonas in Book 1 was to show God's support and protection for Columbanus and his monks. This divine intervention in Columbanus's life, which was shown in the miracles God worked for and through Columbanus, was the greatest indication of Columbanus's sanctity. The biblical citations are thus in essence dealing with fate and predestination. As such, all these citations are connected with miracle accounts, particularly miracles that concern the provision of food. The citations and allusions are predominantly from the Old Testament and, above all, from the Psalms.

Columbanus's reliance on and trust in God were seen early on, when his master, Sinilis, asked him questions on difficult matters of scripture. Jonas tells us that Columbanus tried to work out these difficult issues, not for any learned glory for himself but in obedience to his master. Columbanus knew that God could help him in this task, as he remembered the words of the Psalm (80: 11): "Open your mouth and I will fill it."⁶⁰ In turn, his reliance on God meant that the secrets of scripture were revealed to him so much that he even wrote a commentary on the Psalms in his youth. He placed his trust in God again when he was set upon by twelve wolves while walking in the forests of the Vosges, "with a book slung from his shoulder, thinking to himself about some point of Sacred Scripture." He was pondering whether, if he had to choose, he would rather fall prey to human violence or be attacked by wild animals. This thought experiment was answered as he was beset first by wolves and then by a group of Suevi bandits who passed near him in the woods. When the wolves first approached him, he remained perfectly still and called on God in the words of Psalm 69: 2: "O God, come to my assistance; O Lord, make haste to help me!"—a key verse for Cassian (*Conferences* 10.10) and also cited by Columbanus in his *RCoen*.⁶¹ The wolves tore at his clothes but left him unharmed. Although Jonas does not explicitly draw out the figurative sense of this scene, the way he constructs it is worth noting. Columbanus is meditating on the scriptures (the book he is reading) when he is beset on his right and his left by twelve wolves (twelve being the number for community and wolves symbolizing treachery or false ministers, as in Matthew 7: 15–20) which come toward him and snap at his clothes, but because he stands unmoved, they leave him. Clothing has an important symbolic meaning in the Bible, particularly with regard to the priests in the Old Testament, whose garments are a symbol of ritual holiness, and the

60. VC 1.3: 158. Several hagiographers conspicuously used this verse in their prologues, including some who had read Jonas. See *Vita Arnulfi*, *Passio Praeieci*, *Vita Sadalbergae*, *Vita Amandi I*. My thanks to Jamie Kreiner on this point.

61. VC 1.8: 166. See O'Hara and Wood 2017, 112 n. 124.

cutting or tearing off of the corner of someone's garment indicates rebellion or a desire to break away from the person's control. In this case, Jonas appears to be alluding (ever so subtly through the use of biblical numerology and imagery) to the rebellious factions within the Columbanian *familia* (the twelve wolves) who rebelled against Columbanus's *doctrina* and his legacy.

However, it is in the miracle accounts where God provides food for Columbanus and his monks that this providential use of the Bible is most clearly evident. Jonas alludes to Deuteronomy 8: 3 when Columbanus first entered the wilderness of the Vosges and settled at Annegray. Columbanus was satisfied with only a little food, "remindful of the words that, man does not live on bread alone but is satisfied with the word of life, abounding in overflowing food, as whoever takes this up will never be hungry."⁶² This reliance on God is doubly illustrated in the next chapter, when a man unexpectedly brings food to the famished community and when a local abbot called Carontoc received a vision in which he was instructed by God to bring food to Annegray. When Columbanus received the provisions, he gave thanks to God, "who in such a way did not delay to provide a meal for his servants in the desert," echoing Psalm 77: 19–20.⁶³ The text from Psalms was later quoted by the priest Winioch when he miraculously discovered that the granary at Luxeuil had been filled overnight after he had rebuked the saint for not giving proper attention to making sure the community had enough provisions.⁶⁴ Columbanus had replied to such criticisms with two biblical examples that stressed God's providential care: "If people would only serve their Creator as they should, they would never in all ages know hunger, as indeed the voice of the prophetic Psalmist celebrates: 'I have not seen the just forsaken, nor his seed seeking bread.' He who satisfied the hunger of five thousand with five loaves of bread can very easily fill the storehouse with grain" (Matthew 14: 21).⁶⁵

This biblical stylization in which Columbanus parallels the same miracles as those worked by Christ is common, and in the *Vita*, a lot of these providential citations occur in this kind of miracle account. Faith as justification for God's providential care is emphasized earlier in the text, where Columbanus performs a miracle similar to that performed by Moses when he prayed that water might be produced from rock. He told his attendant to check the wall of the cave, "remembering that the Lord produced water from rock for the people of Israel."⁶⁶

62. VC 1.6: 163.

63. VC 1.7: 166.

64. VC 1.17: 182.

65. VC 1.17: 182 (O'Hara and Wood 2017, 130).

66. VC 1.9: 168.

A providential image of God's care for Israel, an allusion to Psalm 16: 8 and 120: 4, is used by Jonas in the latter half of Book 1 after Columbanus and the Insular members of his communities had been expelled from their monasteries. It follows a miracle account in which the ship that was supposed to take the monks back from Nantes to Ireland became stranded after it had been driven ashore by powerful waves. Jonas notes that after this, no one tried to prevent the saint from staying but rather actively helped him, giving him gifts and food. He also adds that Columbanus did not need any protection, "because the help of the Creator remained in everything and because He will never fall asleep who covers Israel under the shadow of His wings."⁶⁷

Similar imagery of God's care for the Israelites appears to the fore in another miracle account, where Columbanus and his monks were lacking food when they were in Alamannia. It is perhaps the best illustration of this type of biblical stylization. Again, Jonas stresses that their strong faith remained, "which could obtain the necessities from the Lord."⁶⁸ When the monks were famished after having had nothing to eat for three days, there suddenly appeared a great flock of birds which completely filled the whole area, "just as once the quail covered the camp of the Israelites." Columbanus knew that this gift was from God. That it was a miracle was confirmed by the fact that when the monks caught the birds, none of them tried to fly away. Jonas further refers to this as the "manna of birds."⁶⁹ The birds remained for three days, but on the fourth, a local bishop, who had been divinely inspired, sent grain to Columbanus and his monks. When these provisions arrived, the birds left.⁷⁰ In this case, the exiled community from Luxeuil, banished from Burgundy, is compared to the Israelites of the Exodus and would in time be led across the mountains by Columbanus (a second Moses) under the guidance of an angel (the only appearance of an angel in Book 1) to establish their final community of Bobbio, a place of bounty where two streams meet. It is clear in Jonas's mind, at least, which was the preeminent Columbanian house.

The Bible As a Source of Religious Sentiment

Jonas also used biblical citations and allusions to express more general religious sentiments, to formulate an ethical proposition, or to give an event an ethical framework in which to understand it. He did this predominantly in Book 2. This

67. VC 1.23: 206.

68. VC 1.27: 215.

69. VC 1.27: 215. See similar use of terminology when Jonas refers to the manna of fish caught in the Moselle: VC 1.11: 171.

70. VC 1.27: 215.

is perhaps not surprising, given that the overriding concerns in Book 2 are with dissent and death. Jonas abandoned the chronological narrative he had used in Book 1 for a seemingly less coherent, composite approach in Book 2. Like the Acts of the Apostles, it concerned the early history of the saint's disciples.⁷¹ He did not, however, simply portray the early history of the Columbanian *familia*. The disunity and destructiveness of dissent were among the things Jonas wished to engage with and dissuade in Book 2. The importance of unity for Jonas is underlined through his allusion to Acts 4: 32 two times in the text. In chapter 10 of Book 1, Jonas states that although "they had one mind and one heart," Columbanus decided to found a new monastery because of the influx of so many monks in Luxeuil.⁷² The same phrase is used in Book 2 when Jonas describes how it was no problem for Bertulf, the future abbot of Bobbio and the one who commissioned the *Vita* from Jonas, to join Athala's monastic community at Bobbio when this abbot visited Luxeuil, where Bertulf was then a monk. Because Eustasius and Athala, the abbots of Luxeuil and Bobbio, "were of one heart and one spirit," Jonas writes, "there was no discord between them when, between themselves, they exchanged those subject to them by mutual agreement."⁷³

In Book 2, Jonas mostly uses these kinds of citations in relation to deaths. A notable and important exception is when he cites Matthew 16: 18: "You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it," as the biblical foundation for the primacy of the papacy.⁷⁴ This is cited in the context of Agrestius going over to the schismatic Aquileians who defended the Three Chapters in that controversy. Rome's primacy here is clearly emphasized by Jonas, as he says that once Agrestius became a member of this schismatic group, he was "separated from communion with the See of Rome and divided from the communion of the whole world."⁷⁵ In the following chapter, concerning the divine punishments inflicted on Agrestius and his supporters, Jonas conveys the sense that Agrestius got what he deserved when he was reputedly killed by his slave for having had sexual relations with the man's wife. Jonas alludes to Ecclesiastes 12: 14 and cites 1 Corinthians 3: 13 regarding God's judgment of one's actions.⁷⁶ The latter is in the same form as that of the Vulgate and is also cited by Columbanus in an eschatological sermon.⁷⁷ We further see

71. See Berschin 1988a, 28.

72. VC 1.10: 170.

73. VC 2.23: 281.

74. VC 2.9: 247.

75. VC 2.9: 247.

76. VC 2.10: 254.

77. Columbanus, *Instructio* 9.1: 98, in SCO.

this use of the Bible to convey religious sentiments when Jonas describes the death of Abbot Athala with reference to Job 26: 3 (“His spirit has embellished the heavens”)⁷⁸ and at the death of the nun Augnofleda, when some of the nuns who were some distance away from the monastery heard angels singing a verse of Psalm 50.⁷⁹ These were all ways in which Jonas used the Bible as the authoritative source on which he framed his narratives as mini-Bibles for his own day.

JONAS’S READING OF THE BIBLE

Jonas does not seem to have been interested in giving an allegorical interpretation of the biblical citations and allusions he uses. This may have been because he was writing not for an exclusively monastic or clerical audience but also for the Frankish ruling elites of the Neustrian-Burgundian kingdom. His approach in using the Bible is practical, straightforward; he was more interested in interpreting the world through the Bible and the Bible through the world. His reading of the Bible is quintessentially monastic. His intention in using the Bible was to show that God’s providence continued to work in the events of Columbanus’s life and those of his followers. They were *testimonia*, proofs, and as Jamie Kreiner has shown with regard to Merovingian hagiography, they were socially geared and grounded in the legal terminology of the Merovingian kingdom.⁸⁰ They had a point to make, and the people they sought to influence were the Frankish ruling elite.

In Jonas’s biblical references, we find no trace of the same allegorical interpretations that are much more apparent in the hagiographical works of Gregory the Great and Gregory of Tours. As both bishops and hagiographers, Gregory the Great and Gregory of Tours were more likely to extrapolate on the biblical citations they used. For example, in referring to his saintly uncle Gallus, the bishop of Clermont, Gregory of Tours alluded to Psalm 124: 7 in comparing this saintly bishop to those “birds fleeing from a snare and flying up to the skies” which “have escaped their bonds with the help of a lively spirit and, leaving the terrestrial possessions which they despise, they have turned all their attention towards celestial matters.”⁸¹ In his *Liber vitae patrum*, which are short accounts of Gallic saints, the use of biblical citations are surprisingly sparse, apart from the elaborate prefaces in which Gregory uses biblical passages as starting points for introducing the saint in question. A good example of his more figurative

78. VC 2.6: 240.

79. VC 2.13: 264.

80. Kreiner 2014b.

81. Gregory of Tours, *Liber vitae patrum* 6: 32.

reading of the Bible can be found in his preface to the *Life of Patroclus*.⁸² The examples could be multiplied. Likewise, Gregory the Great in the *Dialogues* was more likely to give an extended figurative reading of biblical scenes; the Bible served as a narrative scaffold on which to hang his accounts of more contemporary Italian saints. We see in Gregory the Great the close interplay among hagiographic narrative, exegesis, and homiletics. In talking about the compunction of the holy man Eleutherius, for example, Gregory explains that the compunction of fear can lead the soul to love. He takes a scene from the Book of Joshua to symbolize this:

This is beautifully symbolized in one of the historical books of the Bible. There we read that Achsa, the daughter of Caleb, sighed as she sat on her beast of burden. "And Caleb asked her, 'What is troubling you?' She answered, 'Give me an additional gift! Since you have assigned to me land in the Negeb, give me also pools of water.' So he gave her the upper and the lower pools." We say that Achsa sat on an ass because her soul presided over the irrational movements of her flesh. Just as she begged her father with a sigh for pools of water, so must we with deep groans obtain from our Creator the grace of tears. . . . Caleb gave Achsa the upper and lower pools. These correspond to the two kinds of compunction.

And so forth.⁸³

This type of figurative exegetical reading of the Bible is nowhere found in Jonas, although we have alluded to some examples in which an underlying figurative reading may have been intended (for example, in the scene where Columbanus is attacked by twelve wolves).⁸⁴ But Jonas never makes this explicit. He seems to take a more literal or historical approach to scripture. He does not extrapolate elaborate allegorical readings from the citations he uses, but instead they simply serve to highlight a point or to make a biblical parallel. The biblical references, therefore, have a more utilitarian function than they do in the works of Gregory the Great and Gregory of Tours. This lack of commentary, particularly figurative or allegorical, may indicate that Jonas was more influenced by a different tradition of reading and studying the Bible than the other authors were. His preference for the literal sense of scripture over that of an allegorical interpretation might suggest a familiarity with Antiochene exegetical thought,

82. *Liber vitae patrum* 11: 65.

83. Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* 3.34 (Zimmerman translation, 174–175). On Gregory's figurative reading of the Bible, see Markus 1997, 34–50.

84. On the influence of biblical typology on hagiography, see Earl 1975; Van Uytanghe 1987; Krueger 1997; Duncan 2000.

which stressed the importance of the literal interpretation of the Bible.⁸⁵ As Frances Young noted: “Fundamentally the Antiochenes approached texts philologically, reacting against the identification of allegory where there was nothing in the text to suggest that that was intended. . . . They were basically interested in the narrative logic of particular stories, objecting to methods which turned the text into a kind of code to be cracked.”⁸⁶

This type of exegesis was especially influential in Irish scriptural studies, where the most influential exponent of this school was Theodore of Mopsuestia, a fifth-century bishop from Asia Minor whose works were condemned as heretical at the Fifth Ecumenical Council in 553 in Constantinople.⁸⁷ This led to the Three Chapters controversy in which Columbanus became involved. Theodore’s most well-known work in the West was his *Commentary on the Psalms*, which was translated into Latin by a Pelagian bishop, Julian of Eclanum.⁸⁸ This work was transmitted largely in Irish circles, and a copy glossed in Old Irish, now in the Ambrosiana library in Milan, was read in Bobbio.⁸⁹ It was previously thought to have been the work of Columbanus himself, his lost *Commentary on the Psalms* written in Ireland.⁹⁰ As noted by Martin McNamara, “Theodore’s approach to the Psalms and his emphasis on the supremacy of the literal and historical sense made a very deep impact on Irish exegesis.”⁹¹ While clarifying that the Antiochene school also had a spiritual exegesis, albeit one that rejected allegory and allegorization, McNamara highlights a twofold historical sense that was prominent in Antiochene exegesis that focused on two points of reference with regard to fulfillment (one with regard to Israel’s history and the other with regard to Christ and the Church) and notes that this twofold historical sense appears in early Irish works of exegesis. The implication here is that typology was regarded as part of the historical sense. There was, however, considerable variety within Irish scriptural studies which was not solely influenced by Antiochene tradition but was firmly grounded in the late patristic tradition that drew on different authorities. Hiberno-Latin exegesis is a large body of work, and it has been estimated that Irish exegetical works from the seventh

85. On the influence of Antiochene exegesis in the West, see Laistner 1947. On Alexandrian and Antiochene exegesis more generally, see Young 1997, 161–185; 2003.

86. Young 2008, 853–854.

87. See Stancliffe 1975; McNamara 1996b, 2000.

88. See *Theodori Mopsuesteni Expositionis in Psalmos Iuliano Aecelenensi interprete in latinum uersae quae supersunt*.

89. Theodore of Mopsuestia, *The Commentary on the Psalms with Glosses in Old-Irish Preserved in the Ambrosian Library*; see also Ó Néill 2002.

90. See VC 1.3.

91. McNamara 2000, 93.

and eighth centuries exceeded in number everything else written in this field in Spain, England, and Italy during this period.⁹²

The most prevalent exegetical school of thought had always been the Alexandrian one, whose greatest exponent was Origen, who in turn influenced Jerome and Augustine. It was this tradition of exegesis that became the most dominant throughout Europe. Alexandrian exegesis was characterized by a freer approach to scripture, in which the literal sense was seen as the first step toward a higher allegorical and spiritual interpretation that lay concealed beneath the former. It was this school of thought that influenced Gregory the Great's approach to the Bible. An Antiochene approach was less common in the west, although Theodore of Tarsus, who became archbishop of Canterbury in 668, was also a proponent of this school.⁹³ This exegetical approach developed as a reaction against what were perceived as the abuses of the Alexandrian allegorical method. The Antiochenes took a less mystical and more philological, scholarly stance toward the Bible.

This more rational and scientific method is most apparent in a work written in Ireland around 655 by a pseudonymous writer known as Augustinus Hibernicus. His *De mirabilibus sacrae scripturae* is a remarkable work that deals with biblical miracles that defy rational explanation.⁹⁴ Augustinus Hibernicus's work is concerned with giving these miracles a rational explanation. Such an endeavor is arguably the product of an Antiochene approach to reading the Bible. In one case, Augustinus discusses the miracle in Exodus in which God turns water into blood as one of the plagues on the Egyptians (Exodus 7: 20, 21). He argues that the water did not actually turn into blood but only into the appearance and taste of blood. Although he does not discuss it, Augustinus is also alluding to the first miracle worked by Christ at the wedding feast at Cana, when Christ turned water into wine (John 2: 1–11), with the implication that Christ, too, did not change the substance of the water into wine but merely its color and taste. In essence, it remained water, but it looked and tasted like wine.⁹⁵ This argument stemmed from a perspective that the inherent nature of things could not change; things could only change their appearance.

As suggested by the writer's name, he was considerably influenced by the writings of Augustine of Hippo. Damian Bracken has highlighted Augustinus's dependence on Augustine for his concept of miracles, although the Irish

92. Stancliffe 1975, 370.

93. See Bischoff and Lapidge 1994, 243–249.

94. Augustinus Hibernicus, *De mirabilibus sacrae scripturae*. See MacGinty 1971 for a new edition, which is being revised posthumously for publication by Brepols. A selection is translated in Carey 1998, 51–74.

95. Augustinus Hibernicus, *De mirabilibus* 18 (PL 35, 2165).

Augustine advanced alternative interpretations that were quite different from those of the Church Father.⁹⁶ The treatment of the Cana miracle is one instance of Augustinus's independence; for Augustine, the water completely changed into wine.

Augustinus Hibernicus's unusual and scientific approach to the Cana miracle is also found in Jonas. In the VV, Jonas describes a miracle worked by Bishop Vedast that parallels the one described by the evangelist John. Jonas specifically alludes to the miracle at Cana and in so doing notes that what was changed was not the substance of the water but the taste (*aquas in vinum mutavit saporem*).⁹⁷ A similar rationalist view is also evident in the VC in a miracle account in which Jonas describes how the oil and water that filled a lamp at Faremoutiers had been changed into milk miraculously during the night. When the milk was poured out of the lamp, the oil began to increase. At the end of the account, Jonas rhetorically asks, "What thing had done this so that it changed the created thing of water into the appearance of milk and commanded the oil to increase to the point of overflowing?"⁹⁸ This is essentially the same thought as that behind the Cana miracle. The essence of the water in the lamp had not changed, only its appearance (*speciem verteret*). As both of these texts were written around a decade before Augustinus Hibernicus was writing, it cannot be said that Augustinus's views were, in this regard, original. Both Jonas and Augustinus seem to have been drawing from and influenced by the same exegetical tradition of reading the Bible. Furthermore, the lack of allegorical interpretation in the VC suggests that Jonas was influenced by an Antiochene reading of the Bible, which, given the rarity of such a tradition on the Continent, may suggest that he acquired this approach through the mediation of Irish influence during his monastic formation at Bobbio.

Whatever the extent of Antiochene exegetical influence on Jonas, which is difficult to establish for certain, it is clear that the Bible constituted the most important source of influence for his hagiography. It was the medium through which he understood his world, the events, and the people he wrote about. There was a continuous interplay between the events he wrote about and the Divine Word. While Jonas does not show evidence of an overtly allegorical reading of the Bible and did not give a moral excursus on the citations he made, he was nonetheless influenced by a figural interpretation of reality grounded in a biblical understanding of the world. Thus, Brunhild is the antitype of the

96. Bracken 1998. See also Smyth 2008; MacGinty 1987.

97. VV 4: 312.

98. *Quid hoc fuerit, ut hanc creaturam aquae in lactis speciem verteret vel oleum fluendo multiplicare iuberet.* VC 2.21: 277.

bad queen Jezebel, Agrestius is the antitype of the treacherous brother Cain, Chlothar II is the Davidic king who heeds his prophet Columbanus, a type of Elijah/Elisha, and so on. These are, as Erich Auerbach understood, figural representations of a deeper reality, “so that the earthly event is a prophecy or *figura* of a part of a wholly divine reality that will be enacted in the future.”⁹⁹ But the snappy language of the Bible also influenced the syntactical style of Merovingian historiographers and hagiographers. Auerbach’s comment on the style of Gregory of Tours can equally be applied to Jonas; his biblical models “showed him how to bring realistic everyday material into his historical work; and they taught him his rich use—quite unrhetorical in the classical sense—of direct discourse as a means of revealing motives or character in soliloquy.”¹⁰⁰

Biblical models provided a multivalent repository from which the hagiographer could draw and frame his narrative within the perspective of salvation history. Writing predominantly with an elite audience in mind, particularly the Neustrian court and the successors of Chlothar II, who had united the Merovingian kingdoms, Jonas hoped to influence the new regime by reminding them of the cooperation that was essential between prophets and kings in order to ensure divine benediction for the kingdom. Columbanus is framed essentially as a prophet, a second Elijah or Elisha, who speaks and acts according to God’s will. The failure of the previous dynasty to respect and heed Columbanus is explicitly presented as the cause of their downfall. The lesson for the new dynasty is not to make the same mistake but to respect and protect Columbanus’s spiritual heirs: his communities and their rights. This message was obviously salient during the minority of Clovis II, who succeeded after the death of his father, Dagobert I, in 639, which corresponds to the time of writing of the VC. A remarkable surviving letter written by an unknown clergyman to the young King Clovis II in around 645 advises the king on how to rule and how to take as his model the great kings of Israel David and Solomon and to listen to his prophets (i.e., the clergy) *pro stabilitate patriae*.¹⁰¹ With the succession of a boy king, ecclesiastical leaders may have been justifiably concerned about the future. New factions were at work at court, particularly around the powerful Neustrian mayor of the palace and regent, Aega, who was an enemy of the Burgundian nobility and no friend of the Columbanian communities. His death in 642 is noted with relief by Jonas in his account of Faremoutiers, where he mentions that the mayor had been harassing the community and, as Yaniv Fox, has suggested,

99. Auerbach 1984, 72; on figural interpretation, see also Auerbach 2003 [1954], 73–76.

100. Auerbach 1993 [1965], 111.

101. *Epistolae Aevi Merovingici collectae* 15: 457–460.

he was a rival of Burgundofara's family, the Faronids.¹⁰² If the VC was in part written with the boy king Clovis II and his court in mind as a work of apologetics, Jonas's concerns may have been well founded. If we are to believe the account in the *Liber Historiae Francorum*, Clovis II took exactly the opposite advice to that of his well-meaning episcopal adviser (as many boys tend to do): "In that time Clovis cut off the arm of blessed Denis the Martyr at the instigation of the devil. And throughout the same period the kingdom of the Neustrians fell into disastrous circumstances. This Clovis was indeed given to every kind of filth, he was a fornicator, a defiler of women and bloated by gluttony and drunkenness. His end and his death are not worthy of history."¹⁰³

While Jonas was not a theologian comparable to Gregory the Great or later Bede, we can nonetheless trace the ways he drew extensively from sacred scripture. He used the Bible primarily as a typological source of comparison and stylization, as a fundamental mode of communication. Jonas appears to have been influenced by a more literal/historical rather than figurative/allegorical approach to the Bible, and this may reflect his monastic formation in Bobbio. Certainly, when compared with other hagiographers and their use of the Bible, we find discernible differences between Jonas and the allegorical/moral approach of Gregory the Great and Gregory of Tours in their hagiography. Jonas's saints' Lives provide an important source for the use of the Bible in the mid-seventh century and for the different versions of the biblical texts in circulation at that time. This was a dynamic period of liturgical innovation, investment, and specialization in Merovingian Gaul, as well as a time of gradual transition from the Old Latin versions of the Bible to Jerome's Vulgate, transitions that we can discern in Jonas's hagiography (see tables 5.1a 5.1b, and and 5.1c).

102. VC 2.17; Fox 2014, 203–204.

103. *Liber Historiae Francorum* 44: 89 (translation by Fouracre and Gerberding).

Table 5.1a. Use of the Bible in the *Vita Columbani*. (* = implicit allusion.
** = explicit citation. V = Jerome's Vulgate.)

Chapter	Biblical Citation/Allusion	Function
<i>Epistola ad abbatem</i>	Ephesians 6: 17 *	1
<i>Epistola ad abbatem</i>	Isaiah 3: 12 **	2
1.2	John 15: 5 *	5
1.2 (<i>Tunc iusti fulgebunt sicut sol in regno patris eorum</i>)	Matthew 13: 43 (V) **	5
1.2 (<i>Qui autem diliget te, sicut sol in ortu suo splendet, sic rutilent</i>)	Judges 5: 31 (V) **	5
1.3	Revelation 1: 16 *	1
1.3	Ephesians 6: 13–17 *	1
1.3	Luke 9: 62 *	1
1.3	Genesis 3: 6 *	2
1.3	Judges 16: 4–21 *	2
1.3	Samuel 11: 2–27 *	2
1.3	1 Kings 11: 1–8 *	2
1.3 (<i>Qui amat patrem aut matrem plus quam me, non est me dignus?</i>)	Matthew 10: 37 (V) **	2
1.3 (<i>Aperi os tuum, et ego adimplebo illud</i>)	Psalms 80: 11 **	3
1.4	Matthew 11: 29–30 *	1
1.4	Luke 9: 23 *	1
1.4 (<i>Exi de terra tua et de congregatione tua et de domo patris tui et vade in terram, quam monstrabo tibi</i>)	Genesis 12: 1 **	3
1.4 (<i>Ignem veni mittere in terram; quam volo, ut ardeat</i>)	Luke 12: 49 **	5
1.5 (<i>Qui se humiliat exaltabitur</i>)	Luke 14: 11 **	2
1.5 (<i>Ad quem respiciam, nisi ad humilem et quietum et tremmentem sermones meos?</i>)	Isaiah 66: 2 (same phrase quoted by Columbanus <i>Sermon</i> 2.2) **	2
1.5	Acts 4: 32 *	1
1.6 (<i>Qui vult . . . post me venire abneget semet ipsum sibi, tollat crucem suam et sequatur me</i>)	Luke 9: 23 **	3
1.6	Deuteronomy 8: 3 *	5
1.7	John 4: 52–53 *	1
1.7	Psalms 77: 19–20 *	4
1.8 (<i>Deus, in adiutorium meum intende; Domine, ad adiuvandam me festina!</i>)	Psalms 69: 2 (same as cited by Columbanus in <i>RCoen.</i> 9.10) **	3
1.9	Numbers 20: 7–11 *	1
1.9 (<i>Si habueritis fidem sicut granum sinapis, dicetis monti huic: "Transi et transiet, et nihil impossibile erit vobis."</i>)	Matthew 17: 19 **	2

Table 5.1a. Continued

Chapter	Biblical Citation/Allusion	Function
1.9 (<i>Omnia quecumque orantes petitis credite quia accipietis, et venient vobis</i>)	Mark 11: 24 **	2
1.10	Acts 4: 32 *	1
1.11	Psalm 77: 24 *	4
1.14	Luke 1: 5–25 (derived from Juvenius) *	1
1.15	Mark 7: 33 *	1
1.15	Genesis 8: 6–7 *	1
1.17 (<i>Non vidi iustum derelictum nec semen eius, quarens panem</i>)	Psalm 36: 25 **	2
1.17	Matthew 14: 17–21 *	4
1.17	Psalm 77: 19 *	4
1.17	Matthew 14: 20 *	1
1.18	1 Kings 16–21; 2 Kings 9: 30–37 *	1
1.19 (<i>Munera impiorum reprobant altissimus</i>)	Ecclesiastes 34: 23 **	3
1.19	John 13: 4–5 *	1
1.19	Acts 16: 28 *	1
1.20	2 Kings 6: 18 *	1
1.20	2 Kings 1: 13–14 *	1
1.20	2 Kings 1: 9 *	1
1.20	2 Kings 1: 13–14 *	1
1.20	1 Kings 13: 4 *	1
1.22	1 Kings 12–14 *	1
1.23	Matthew 12: 39–41 *	1
1.23	Psalm 16: 8 *	4
1.27	Exodus 16: 13 *	4
1.27 (<i>Panem caeli dedit eis; V has triticum caeli dedit eis</i>)	Psalm 77: 24 **	4
<i>Versus ad mensam</i>	Daniel 2: 32–40 *	1
<i>Versus ad mensam</i>	Psalm 91: 13 *	1
<i>Versus ad mensam</i>	John 5: 1–5 *	1
<i>Versus ad mensam</i>	Matthew 7: 24 *	1
<i>Versus ad mensam</i>	Ephesians 2: 20; 1 Peter 2: 6 *	1
<i>Versus ad mensam</i>	Revelation 21: 18–21 *	1
<i>Versus ad mensam</i>	Psalm 23: 1 *	1
2.2	2 Kings 4: 29 *	1
2.2	Matthew 17: 9 *	2
2.6	Psalm 83: 7; John 6: 38 *	5
2.6	Ephesians 4: 26–27; 1 Corinthians 15: 45–47 *	5

(continued)

Table 5.1a. Continued

Chapter	Biblical Citation/Allusion	Function
2.6	Mark 1: 10; Acts 7: 55–56 *	1
2.6 (<i>Spiritus eius ornavit caelos</i>)	Job 26: 13 (V) **	5
2.9	Genesis 4: 8; Matthew 26: 14–16 *	1
2.9 (<i>A, a, a, domine Deus, ecce ego puer sum, nescio loqui</i>)	Jeremiah 1: 6 **	2
2.9	Exodus 4: 10 *	2
2.9 (<i>Tu es Petrus et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam et porte inferi non praevallebunt adversus eam</i>)	Matthew 16: 18 **	5
2.9 (<i>Dominus custodit te ab omni malo; custodiat animam tuam Dominus. Dominus custodiat introitum tuum et exitum tuum ex hoc nunc et usque in saeculum</i>)	Psalms 120: 7–8 **	4
2.9	Matthew 10: 22 *	5
2.9 (<i>Vigilate et orate, ne intretis in temptationem</i>)	Matthew 26: 41 **	2
2.10	Job 26: 13 *	5
2.10 (<i>Vae qui dicit malum bonum et bonum malum</i>)	Isaiah 5: 20 **	2
2.10	Ecclesiastes 12: 14 *	5
2.10 (<i>Uniuscuiusque opus quod sit, ignis probabit</i>)	1 Corinthians 3: 13 **	5
2.12 (<i>Date et dabitur vobis. . . Dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris</i>)	Luke 6: 38; Matthew 6: 12 **	2
2.13	Job *	1
2.13	Romans 12: 12 *	5
2.13 (<i>Confitemini Domino, quoniam bonus, quoniam in aeternum misericordia eius. Confitemini Deo deorum, quoniam in aeternum misericordia eius</i>)	Psalms 135: 1–2 (V) **	5
2.14 (<i>Asperges me ysoopo, et mundabor; lavabis me, et super nivem dealbabor. Auditui meo dabis gaudium et laetitia, et exultabunt ossa humiliata</i>)	Psalms 50: 9–10 (V) **	5
2.20	Exodus 14: 19–20 *	1
2.20 (<i>Cantemus Domino, gloriose enim honorificatus est</i>)	Exodus 15: 1 **	5
2.22	Genesis 3: 1–24 *	2
2.22	Daniel 4: 12–30 *	1
2.23	Matthew 10: 37–40 *	3
2.25	1 Corinthians 14: 20 *	5
2.25 (<i>Ibunt sancti de virtute in virtutem; videbitur Deus deorum in Syon</i>)	Psalms 83: 8 **	5

Table 5.1b. Use of the Bible in the *Vita Iohannis*. (* = implicit allusion.

** = explicit citation. V = Jerome's Vulgate.)

Chapter	Biblical Citation/Allusion	Function
<i>Praefatio</i> (Qui sunt isti, qui ut nubes volant et quasi columbae ad fenestras suas?)	Isaiah 60: 8 (V) **	5
<i>Praefatio</i> (vas electionis)	Acts 9: 15 (V) **	1
2 (<i>Puer autem crescebat et confortabatur in spiritu et erat in deserto usque ad diem ostensionis sue ad Israel</i>)	Luke 1: 80 (V) **	3
2	Mark 1: 20 **	3
2	Matthew 20: 23 *	1
3	Ephesians 6: 16–17 *	1
6 (<i>Qui non reliquerit patrem aut matrem, non est me dignus; V has qui amat patrem aut matrem plus quam me non est me dignus</i> , which Jonas cites in this form in VC 1.3)	Matthew 10: 37 **	3
8 (<i>Beati pauperes spiritu, quoniam ipsorum est regnum caelorum</i>)	Matthew 5: 3 (V) **	2
8 (<i>Beati, qui aesuriunt et siciunt iusticiam, quoniam ipsi saturabuntur</i>)	Matthew 5: 6 (V) **	2
8 (<i>Pone in Domino spem tuam, et ipse te enutriet</i>)	Psalms 54: 23 **	2
8	Ephesians 4: 28 **	2
13 (<i>Frangere esurienti panem tuum</i>)	Isaiah 58: 7 (V) **	2
13 (<i>Omni petenti te tribue</i>)	Luke 6: 30 (V) **	2
16 (<i>Ego enim dormio, et cor meum vigilat</i>)	Song of Solomon 5: 2 (V) **	5
18 (<i>Ignem veni mittere in terram, quam volo, ut ardeat?</i>)	Luke 12: 49 **	5
18 (<i>Concupivit anima mea desiderare iustificationes tuas in omni tempore</i>)	Psalms 118: 20 **	5
18 (<i>Ideo dilexi mandata tua super auro et topazion</i>)	Psalms 118: 127 **	5
18 (<i>Venite, exultemus Domino, iubilemus Deo salutari nostro. Preoccupemus faciem eius in confessione Et in psalmis iubilemus ei</i>)	Psalms 94: 1–2 **	2
18 (<i>Venite, adoremus et procidamus ante Dominum qui fecit nos, quia ipse est dominus Deus noster</i>)	Psalms 94: 6–7 **	2
18	2 Thessalonians 3: 10 **	2
18	Joshua 6: 5 *	1
19	Deuteronomy 34: 7 *	1

Table 5.1c. Use of the Bible in the *Vita Vedastis*. (* = implicit allusion. ** = explicit citation. V = Jerome's Vulgate.)

Chapter	Biblical Citation/Allusion	Function
4 (<i>qui in Chana Galileae aquas in vinum mutavit saporem</i>)	John 2 **	1
4	Mark 1: 43–44; Matthew 9: 30–31 *	2
5	Acts 3: 6 *	1
8	Colossians 2: 19 *	1
9 (<i>Ambula, sancti, viam quam elegisti; festina ad locum quem tibi preparatum est</i>)	Psalms 32: 8; Isaiah 48: 17 [Liturgical source?] **	5

The Miracle Accounts

WHILE THE BIBLE PROVIDED THE SCAFFOLDING AND STRUCTURE for the writing of hagiography, miracle accounts were the building bricks with which Jonas constructed his narratives. In chapter 5, the methodology of Marc Van Uytvanghe's work on biblical stylization in Merovingian hagiography was applied to study the ways in which Jonas used the Bible as a mode of communication. In this chapter, I turn to what is perhaps the central feature of any work of hagiography: miracle accounts.¹ I adopt a functionalist methodology similar to that pioneered by two French scholars in the 1970s and 1980s, Jean-Louis Derouet and Pierre-André Sigal, in order to classify the types of miracle accounts that are found in Jonas's works. The purpose of this technical methodology is, again, not only to study the shifting emphases in Jonas's work but also to see whether a change in the types of miracle accounts recorded reflects a shift in intellectual and cultural notions of sanctity. As conscious thought lay behind a particular choice of biblical citation or allusion, so, too, was the case with miracle accounts, which Jonas selected as specific *testimonia* and proofs for the particular cases he sought to advance. If Merovingian hagiography was grounded in the legal culture of Late Antiquity, then miracle accounts were the evidence with which the authors built their cases.

Shifting trends in miracle accounts from sixth-century hagiography through to Jonas reflect social and intellectual shifts in how people understood and related to sanctity as a transition from a more worldly, horizontal plane (dominated by healing accounts in the works of Gregory of Tours or Venantius Fortunatus, for example) to a more vertical, otherworldly worldview (in the works of Jonas and in those of the authors of the seventh-century *Visio Fursei* and the *Visio Baronti*), which can be traced in the types of miracle accounts that were written down. This is simply a shift from a predominance of healing miracles where people are healed through the merits of a saint (horizontal miracle accounts) to nonhealing miracles that are more focused on the transcendent (vertical miracle accounts). This change can be studied empirically by analyzing and comparing the types of miracle accounts that are preserved in works of hagiography from

1. On miracles and miracle accounts in this period, see the contributions by Cracco Ruggini, Van Uytvanghe, and Heinzelmann in the edited volume *Hagiographie, Cultures, et Sociétés* 1981; Boesch Gajano 1983; de Nie 2012; Bartlett 2013, chap. 9, with further references.

the sixth and seventh centuries, which can serve as another indicator of broader cultural and religious transformations.

Miracles demonstrated the power of the saint. Adomnán of Iona refers to some of Columba's miracles as "proofs of his powers,"² while Jonas notes that "the power of God" (*Dei virtutem*) was inflamed in Columbanus.³ But apart from demonstrating the saint's holiness, miracle accounts served other functions. Works in which punishment miracles predominate have a different function from those that are concerned with miracles as proofs of sanctity. In these cases, miracle accounts could serve to intimidate those who sought to encroach on the rights of the ecclesiastical institution. "Beware what I say!" the anonymous author of the tenth-century *Miracula sancti Columbani* warns any prospective bishop who might in the future attempt to take jurisdiction over his monastery—"you cannot rule your bishopric and govern monks according to Saint Benedict's Rule."⁴ These accounts describe the miraculous wanderings of Columbanus's relics, which were exhumed, placed in a specially built pine chest, and solemnly processed through the *terra sancti Columbani*, the lands belonging to the monastery of Bobbio, to the royal Lombard court at Pavia and back again to Bobbio, where the body was reinterred. By this time, the saint had regained his property and privileges, which had been diminished in 929 by a local bishop and a group of nobles.⁵ He did this through a display of post-humous power. The community had reacted to the bishop's and the nobles' intrusion into their affairs by bringing the saint's body to the culprits at the royal court in Pavia.

The purpose of these miracle accounts, then, was to serve as an ecclesiastical tool of intimidation. They were, to borrow an apt phrase from Sigal, who has studied this function in later hagiographic works from central and southern France, "a spiritual rampart."⁶ Bollandist scholar Baudouin de Gaiffier also noted that the primary purpose of these types of miracle accounts in some eleventh-century hagiographic works from Belgium was to defend the interests of the monks when protection from secular powers could not be relied on. The edifying role of miracles was secondary to this practical function.⁷

2. Adomnán of Iona, *Life of Columba* 1.1: 109. This category of "miracles of power" is the subject of book 2 of the *Life of Columba*, while book 1 concerns "prophetic revelations," and book 3 involves "angelic visions." See Charles-Edwards 2010 on the structure and purpose of the *Life of Columba*.

3. VC 1.20: 193.

4. *Miracula sancti Columbani* 23: 1011. On this work, see O'Hara and Taylor 2013. A new edition with translation and commentary is in Dubreucq and Zironi 2015.

5. Columbanus is described as the owner of the property; *Miracula* 25: 1012.

6. Sigal 1976, 52.

7. De Gaiffier 1932, 138.

Jonas relates a total of 121 miracles in the VC: forty-five in Book 1 and seventy-six in Book 2 (see tables 6.1 and 6.2). This number may be compared to the 191 miracles Adomnán reports in his *Life of Columba*, a work that consists wholly of miracle accounts arranged in thematic groupings (see table 6.3), or the approximately 210 cases in Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*, forty-six of which are in Book 2 dealing with Benedict, a figure similar to that for Jonas's Book 1 on Columbanus (see table 6.4). There are also many similarities to Irish hagiography from the seventh century—Cogitosus's *Life of Brigid* from the 640s, the two Lives of Patrick written by Tírechán (c. 670) and by Muirchú (c. 680–690) (see table 6.5), and the *Life of Columba* by Adomnán (690s)—which, despite more folkloric and fantastical elements, contain overwhelmingly nonhealing *in vita* miracle accounts with very few healing or posthumous miracles.⁸ The charming animal miracle accounts found in the VC (which, incidentally, only concern male animals!)⁹ are also found in the Irish hagiography and indeed can be found in the classic works of monastic hagiography from Late Antiquity. The role of the devil and demons in Irish hagiography is not as prominent as in continental hagiography prior to the seventh century, and this minimal role given to the devil is also discerned in Jonas's hagiography, which will be discussed more fully in chapter 7.

Clare Stancliffe has observed that early Christian Ireland shows the same strands as Eastern ascetic thought in that it was more influenced by the theology of Irenaeus of Lyons than Augustine, whereby it was possible for man through ascetic discipline to attain purity of heart:

The ascetic must do battle with the devil on the way, but victory over him is possible. Such ideas were mediated to the west through such writings as Evagrius' translation of Athanasius' *Life of Antony*, and the works of John Cassian. They provide the rationale for all those vertical miracles where the saint is portrayed in harmony with the rest of creation, as once in Eden, or in communication with angels and the divine sphere. Such men were living the angelic life and engaged in the contemplation of God while still on earth—something which Augustine himself regarded as impossible, apart from momentary glimpses.¹⁰

8. For an overview of the Irish miracle account material from the seventh century and in relation to continental material, see Picard 1981; Stancliffe 1992.

9. I am indebted to Paul Fouracre for this observation, which I had failed to see.

10. Stancliffe 1992, 103, with further references.

This more optimistic, non-Augustinian tradition is the one found in Irish hagiography, and it is also the case in Jonas. The types of miracle accounts recorded could also mark theological fault lines.

The vast majority of the miracles in the VC are nonhealing (as opposed to healing), which is similarly the case with the VV and VJ. This trend is very noticeable, for example, in the *Life of Columba*, which records 180 nonhealing miracles as opposed to only eleven healing instances. A similarly high contrast is seen in the VC. Another noticeable aspect of the VC is the almost complete absence of posthumous miracles. There are seven examples in the *Life of Columba*, while the *Dialogues* show a similar tendency in its lack of posthumous accounts. This could be read as a reflection of the wide-ranging debate over postmortem miracles and the efficacy of saints to intercede after their death that originated in the Eastern Roman Empire in the mid-sixth century and spread to the West, where Gregory's *Dialogues*, written in 594, were a response.¹¹ The wide-ranging shift in the types of miracle accounts recorded in Irish, Merovingian, and Italian hagiography in the same period could also point to a more fundamental and deeper change in concepts of sanctity at this time.

The predominance of nonhealing miracles and the near absence of posthumous ones is in stark contrast to the figures presented by Sigal in his definitive study of miracle accounts in France from the eleventh and twelfth centuries. A comparison between Sigal's statistics and those from the early medieval works, such as the VC, the *Life of Columba*, and the *Dialogues*, points to a change that took place in the cult of the saints. The earlier tendency, for example, of *in vita* miracles emphasizes the importance of the saint as a living wonder-worker, while the predominance of posthumous miracles in the High Middle Ages implies that the saint was more important in death.

In the VC, the prevalence of punishment miracles in Book 2, particularly in the chapters dealing with the renegade monk Agrestius and a number of nuns who attempted to flee from Faremoutiers, suggests that Jonas intended these miracle accounts to be intimidating. The accounts are illustrative of a number of features that Jonas particularly seeks to emphasize. First, he wanted to show what would happen to those who chose not to live by the Rule, who refused to submit themselves to obedience under an abbot, and who actively undermined the Columbanian monastic way of life. He aimed at instilling holy fear (*cultum divini timoris*)¹² into the present generation of Columbanian monks and nuns. Jonas declares the effectiveness of such a psychology: "there is no doubt but that

11. See Dal Santo 2011, 2012.

12. The phrase that Jonas uses when Abbot Eustasius asks the young blind girl Sadalberga whether "her young soul aspired to the observance of sacred dread." VC 2.8: 244.

the punishments of others make many more vigilant in striving to attain heavenly gains.”¹³ In another instance, he states: “While we have not omitted to hand down to posterity the gifts of great things conveyed for the exertion of merit and religious devotion, we likewise consider it right to tell about something that we have found beneficial in inducing terror in a hard and ignoble mind.”¹⁴ The writing down of miracle accounts was not simply the result of a community’s desire to record the miraculous, but the codification of miracle accounts served different functions depending on the text and when it was written.

At their simplest, these accounts were written down to commemorate miraculous events for a religious community. But this was certainly not always the case when it came to the production of hagiography. Saints’ Lives, particularly in later periods, often had more mundane and practical concerns. In Book 1 of Jonas’s *VC*, we see that he is primarily concerned, like Adomnán, with giving “proofs” of Columbanus’s sanctity. In Book 2, Jonas is more concerned with showing how (and how not) Columbanus’s disciples followed his example. The twenty-one punishment miracles in Book 2 are meant to be edifying and intimidating. Consequently, by looking at the various kinds of miracles Jonas records in the *VC* and considering what role they play within the text, both Jonas’s concept of the miraculous and the way miracle accounts could communicate notions of sanctity and correct monastic observance can be studied.

CATEGORIZING THE MIRACULOUS

This way of reading miracle accounts departs from a typological methodology, the more customary way of reading such accounts. An example of this variation in approach can be seen in a common miraculous occurrence in the *VC*. Jonas often mentions the saint’s miraculous encounters with animals. In one such case, he describes a bear, in complying with the saint’s command to leave half the fruit trees in a grove that were needed for the saint’s use, taking the fruit from the portion of the grove that had been allotted to it.¹⁵ A typological classification would classify this as an “animal-type miracle.” According to Christian Rohr, who has discussed the miracles in the first book according to what they can reveal about the sociohistorical aspects of Columbanian monasticism, “die Tierwunder”

13. *nulli quippe dubium est, quod aliorum damna plerosque movendo ad capienda lucra vigilantiores reddant.* *VC* 2.16: 266.

14. *Dum magnarum rerum ob boni meriti religionisque studio conlatarum [munera] non omisimus tradere posteritati, simulque quae ad terrorem durae ac ignavae mentis profuisse conperimus, ratum ducimus intimare.* *VC* 2.22: 277–278 (O’Hara and Wood 2017, 224–225).

15. *VC* 1.27: 216.

accounts for 17.1 percent of miracles in Book 1.¹⁶ Such a sociohistorical reading of miracle accounts, as Rohr alludes to, stems from the seminal methodology of Czech historian František Graus, who realized in the 1960s and 1970s the potential for miracle accounts to open up a vista onto a “sacred landscape.”¹⁷ Viewed from such a perspective, the animal and nature miracles in the VC can reveal some of the difficulties faced by the monastic community in the wilderness.¹⁸ Such miracle accounts do reveal this, but Jonas did not include them for this reason. The focus of the miracle was not that Columbanus did not have any food except the berries that the bear was largely eating but that the bear showed obedience to the saint’s authority. “What amazing obedience in a wild beast!” exclaims Jonas. “The bear did not even dare to take food from the prohibited part but, as long as the man of God remained in that place, sought food only from the trees that had been assigned to it.”¹⁹ Jonas’s intention in describing this miracle was to show a wild beast’s obedience to the saint. While a sociohistorical approach is interesting, it does not tell us much about the hagiographer’s concept of the miraculous or the various purposes of miracle accounts in the text. Classification of miracle accounts based on typology does not sufficiently address the role of the miraculous within hagiographic writings. That animal-type miracles account for 17.1 percent of the miracle accounts in Book 1 of the VC does not tell us a lot except that this type was relatively frequent. If the “animal-type” miracle accounts are read instead from the perspective of their function as “miracles intended to glorify the saint” then we find that these miracle accounts are much more common. Read from this angle, we find that Jonas’s miracle accounts in Book 1 were, for the most part, intended to glorify the saint. When this is compared to Book 2, a different pattern emerges.

THE METHODOLOGY OF DEROUET AND SIGAL

This methodology also informs us about the changing nature of miracle accounts over time and how miracle accounts functioned differently within different texts. In 1976, French scholar Jean-Louis Derouet, discussed these ideas in relation to two contemporary saints’ Lives: the *Vita Arnulfi* and the VC.²⁰ Derouet took the *Vita Arnulfi*, concerning the bishop of Metz and one of the principal ancestors of the Carolingian dynasty, to be representative of a

16. Rohr 1995, 261.

17. Rohr 1995, 258, referring to Graus 1974, 131; 1965.

18. Rohr 1995, 261.

19. VC 1.27: 216.

20. Derouet 1972, 1976. I am very grateful to Jean-Louis Derouet for helping me obtain a copy of his PhD thesis.

corpus of hagiographic texts written during the seventh and eighth centuries in the religious centers of the Meuse and Moselle areas. This Austrasian group of texts stemming from the later Carolingian heartland showed a marked tendency toward miracle accounts that largely dealt with healing and exorcism miracles.²¹ He noted a considerable contrast with the VC, whose author was more concerned with showing the saint's special relationship on earth with the divine. There was a greater emphasis in the miracle accounts between this world and the hereafter. This paradigm of the miraculous, which he terms "miracles that transcend the limits of experience," is characterized by a large number of visionary and prophetic miracles.²²

The example Derouet provides from the VC is the account of the death of the nun Sisetrudis at Faremoutiers.²³ The emphasis in this miracle is on the blessed death of the nun and the soul's return to a state of bliss in heaven from its unhappy state on earth.²⁴ The focus of the miracle is not on curing a physical ailment but on the healing of "the spiritual dissatisfaction of a creature deprived of the presence of its Creator."²⁵ Sisetrudis's miraculous death is referred to by Jonas as the "first encouragement of this monastery" (*primam huius coenubii exhortationem*) to take place at Faremoutiers. Jonas therefore thought that God worked this miracle for its edifying influence on the rest of the community: "so that the others, who were still alive, might aspire to religious worship with all their might."²⁶ As Derouet observes, this paradigm of the miraculous is also dominant in Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* and in the ancient monastic tradition of hagiography.²⁷

The other text Derouet discusses, however, is quite different from Jonas's account in its conception.²⁸ Derouet chose the *Vita Arnulfi* as being typical of hagiographical texts written in the eastern parts of Merovingian Gaul during this period. Here, the focus is firmly back on earth, where the saint is primarily seen as a healer who improves man's condition on earth. Exorcism and healing miracles predominate in the *Vita Arnulfi*, and Derouet looks at two exorcism miracles to outline this "practical" paradigm.²⁹ Derouet delineates two different kinds, or paradigms, of miracle accounts. In the *Vita Arnulfi*, the focus of the miracle has shifted from the saint to the beneficiary who is cured by the saint's intervention. Thus, the focus is on the saint's power, not the person of the saint

21. Derouet 1976, 155.

22. Derouet 1976, 156.

23. Derouet 1976, 159–61.

24. VC 2.11: 258–259.

25. Derouet 1976, 159.

26. VC 2.11: 259 (O'Hara and Wood 2017, 206).

27. Derouet 1976, 159–161.

28. See Derouet 1976, 156–159.

29. *Vita Arnulfi* 9–10: 435–436.

as in Jonas. Perhaps we could see the kinds of miracles that predominate in this text as being more representative of the majority of miracle accounts from the Carolingian period and later, where the focus is more on the healing abilities of saints. This pattern is also predominant in the hagiography of Gregory of Tours.

Such a view is strengthened by the statistics shown in Pierre-André Sigal's study of more than five thousand miracle accounts in French saints' Lives from the eleventh and twelfth centuries.³⁰ In this seminal work, Sigal categorizes miracles into two groups, healing and nonhealing and divides them according to function. The vast majority of these are posthumous healing miracles that occur at the shrine of the saint. If we consider the *VC*, Adomnàn's *Life of Columba*, and Gregory's *Dialogues*, we do not see this. The vast majority of the miracles in the *VC* and the other texts are nonhealing. This is very noticeable, for example, in the *Life of Columba*, in which there are only eleven healing miracles as opposed to 180 nonhealing instances. A similarly high contrast is seen in Jonas's text, where there is a near-complete absence of posthumous miracles. There are seven examples in the *Life of Columba*, while the *Dialogues* show a similar tendency in the lack of posthumous accounts.

Sigal's system of classification can be applied to miracle accounts from the Early Middle Ages, and I have adopted his terminology in classifying miracles in Jonas's works. An obvious benefit of this is that it becomes easier to compare both of our findings. His classification for healing miracles, categorized according to the malady, is straightforward. Nonhealing miracles are categorized into seven groups according to function: difficult childbirth and sterility, protection from dangers, deliverance of prisoners, favorable intervention, glorifying the saint, punishment, and transgressing the limits of experience. The last category, which I have mentioned already in relation to Derouet's article (not referred to by Sigal) is subdivided into visionary and prophetic miracles. "Favorable intervention" and "glorifying the saint" need further clarification.

Sigal classifies miracles in which a saint helps the beneficiary in some way, such as the recovery of lost objects or the multiplication of food or drink, as favorable interventions.³¹ They are not so prevalent in the corpus of texts he looks at: among more than five thousand miracles, there are 347 instances, 241 of which are posthumous.³² The saint thus works these miracles for somebody else's benefit. This kind of miracle can be seen in the *VC*, as, for example, when Columbanus drives away the rain that threatens to destroy a crop at

30. Sigal 1985.

31. Sigal 1985, 271.

32. Sigal 1985, 272.

Fontaine (his intervention in this case benefits the community),³³ although we also find miracles in which we may speak of God's favorable intervention for the saint, where the saint himself is the beneficiary. A good example of this is when Columbanus becomes invisible to the soldiers of King Theuderic who are searching for him in Luxeuil following his expulsion. Columbanus is sitting and reading in the porch of the church while his pursuers pass him, oblivious to his existence.³⁴ Thus, in the VC, the saint can also be the beneficiary of this kind of miracle, whereas in Sigal's texts, the beneficiary is someone other than the saint.

The other kind of miracle, however, has the saint, whether alive or dead, as the beneficiary. Miracles intended to glorify a saint are even less frequent than the favorable interventions in Sigal: only 151 instances, 122 of which are posthumous.³⁵ Whereas in Sigal's texts most miracles glorifying the saint take place in relation to the relics and the shrine, in the earlier texts they take place during the lifetime of the saint. Again, in contrast, these miracles are very frequent in the VC and in other hagiographical works from this period. In fact, both kinds of miracles are the most frequent in Book 1 of the VC. One example of miracles intended to glorify the saint in the VC is Columbanus's encounter with a bear in a cave near Annegray. When the saint commanded the bear to leave its den and never return, the "beast meekly left and did not dare return afterwards."³⁶ The bear's ready obedience to Columbanus demonstrated the saint's authority over the animal. All the instances in which animals are involved are examples of this kind of miracle, because their reaction shows Columbanus's sanctity.³⁷

Sigal's category of miracles that transgress the limits of experience also needs brief clarification. Here Sigal considers visions and phenomena of supernatural knowledge, namely, telepathy and prophetic visions. The latter he subdivides into precognition (the ability to see future events) and foreknowledge (visions of events that are happening at that moment). There are only eighty-three instances of prophetic vision in Sigal's texts, making it one of the less frequent kinds of nonhealing miracles, whereas in the *Life of Columba*, it accounts for more than half of the nonhealing miracles, 101 cases out of 180. Adomnán dedicated the first book of his *Vita* to Columba's prophetic visions. On one occasion of foreknowledge, a monk called Luigbe asked the saint how these visions were revealed to him, "By sight, or hearing, or in some way men know not?" Columba answered him, "There are some people—few indeed—to whom the grace of

33. VC 1.13: 173–174.

34. VC 1.20: 194.

35. Sigal 1985, 273.

36. VC 1.8: 167.

37. VC 1.8; 1.15; 1.17; 1.27.

God has given the power to see brightly and most clearly, with a mental grasp miraculously enlarged, at one and the same time as if lit by a single sunbeam, even the entire orbit of the whole earth and the sea and the sky around it.”³⁸ This recalls Gregory the Great’s account of the vision Benedict had of the soul of Bishop Germanus of Capua being led to heaven by angels, when he beheld the whole world in a ray of sunlight.³⁹ In the VC, the saint similarly sees the whole world but is shown this by an angel in a vision.⁴⁰

JONAS’S TERMINOLOGY OF THE MIRACULOUS

Peter Brown has remarked that above all, “the holy man is a man of power,” while visiting a holy man was “to go to where power was.”⁴¹ The predominant words used to describe a miracle reveal this underlying basis of power. Jonas uses *miraculum* to mean “miracle” six times in the VC and often includes exclamatory phrases such as “Wonderful power!” (*Mira virtus!*), “Wonderful revenge!” (*Mira ultio!*), “Wonderful faith!” (*Mira fides!*) to convey the sense of amazement felt when a miracle took place.⁴² Jonas’s use of these exclamatory clauses, the majority of which occur in Book 1, is a rhetorical technique that served to heighten the sense of dramatic urgency in the miracle accounts.

Miraculum was not the only word Jonas used in describing the miraculous but was one of several. A slightly more frequent term was *virtus*, which occurs nine times. In the poem Jonas wrote as a summary of Columbanus’s miracles at the end of book 1, he describes Columbanus’s miracles as *virtutes*,⁴³ but his use of the same word in the first chapter of the second book is less clear to interpret. Jonas mentions that after Columbanus died, he was succeeded as abbot of Bobbio by Athala, whose *post magistrum virtutes clarae fulserunt*.⁴⁴ Is Jonas referring here to Athala’s virtues as mirroring those of Columbanus, or is he saying that Athala’s miracles mirrored those of his master? Interpreting such a term is difficult, because Jonas uses it interchangeably for both “virtue” and “miracle.” Jonas uses *miraculum* and *virtus* interchangeably in Book 1. Another common word for a miracle, *signum*, is not used. In his use of these words, we see that Jonas’s emphasis on miracles in Book 1 is primarily demonstrative.

38. Adomnán, *Life of Columba* 1.43: 146.

39. Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* 4.2.35.

40. VC 1.27: 217.

41. Brown 1971, 87.

42. See, for example, VC 1.7; 1.12; 1.13; 1.14; 1.15; 1.17; 1.22; 1.23; 1.27; 1.29; 2.3; 2.12.

43. VC 1.30: 227. For Adomnán (*Life of Columba*, second preface) and Gregory the Great, *virtutes*, “miracles of power,” are only one kind of miracle.

44. VC 2.1: 230.

When we look at the words Jonas uses in Book 2, we see an interesting change in vocabulary. Although *miraculum* and *virtus* do appear, they are supplemented by new terms that convey a concept of miracles less as demonstrations of a saint's power but more as edifying signs of God's love. Jonas uses a trio of similes, *exhortatio*, *adhortatio*, and *hortamen*, to refer to miracles but with the emphasis on them being "actions of encouragements."

Jonas also uses *solamen* ("source of comfort"/"solace") and *munus* ("gift") when referring to miracles that took place at Faremoutiers. He begins his account of the miraculous death of Landeberga by stating that "After some time the solaces of encouragement [*consolationis solamina*] again sprang up."⁴⁵ In the following chapter, miracles are now termed as "gifts": "After this the Creator of goodness and of tributes did not delay in lavishing again the gifts of His tenderness" (*Post haec igitur bonitatis ac munerum institutor rursus pietatis suae munera largire non distulit*),⁴⁶ while in the chapter after that, Jonas refers to miracles as "the great things" (*magnarum rerum*) that were given in return for good merit and religious devotion.⁴⁷

We notice a greater diversity of terminology for miracles in Book 2 than in Book 1. With Jonas now terming miracles as "gifts," "sources of comfort," and "actions of encouraging," in addition to the more conventional and limited terminology he uses in Book 1, we see added dimensions to miracles where they are not only used to emphasize someone's sanctity but also serve to encourage a community or communities to live better religious lives. This edifying function of miracle accounts is more to the fore in Book 2, and this greater range of terminology arguably indicates a change in intention in this second part of the work.

MIRACLE ACCOUNTS IN THE *VITA COLUMBANI*

Having looked at the various words Jonas uses to describe the miraculous, we can now turn to the categories of miracle accounts themselves and delineate the principal features of the miraculous in the *VC* and in Jonas's other saints' Lives. A chart may help to illustrate and give an overview of the distribution between healing and nonhealing miracles and the various subcategories in the *VC* (see figure 6.1).

45. *VC* 2.20: 275.

46. *VC* 2.21: 276.

47. Krusch supplies the word *munera* here, as the accusative plural qualifying *magnarum rerum* as an accusative noun is lacking in the manuscript tradition. But due to the grammatical irregularities of Jonas's Latin, the genitive plural noun *rerum* might here be acting as the accusative. *VC* 2.22: 277.

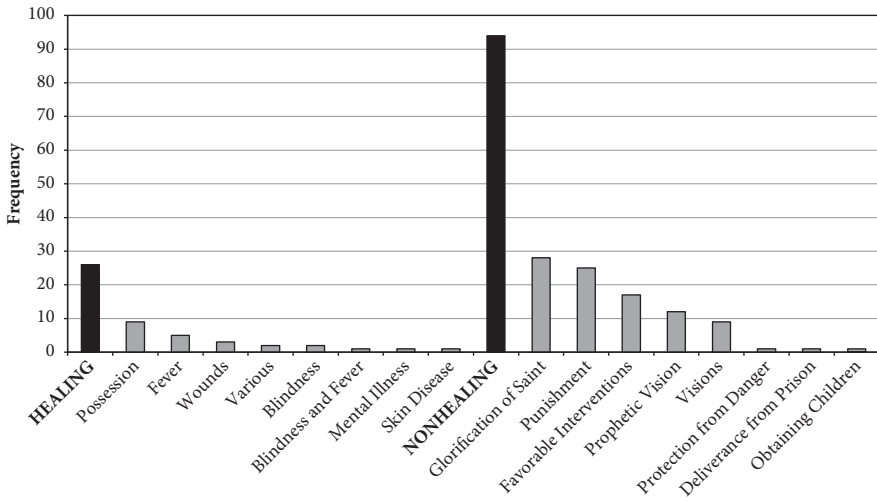


Figure 6.1. Miracles in the *Vita Columbani*.

In the chart, we can see that one subcategory of the nonhealing group is slightly more frequent than all the healing miracles combined. The predominance of nonhealing miracles is very apparent. Out of a total of 120 miracle accounts, ninety-four are nonhealing. If we divide this data into the two component parts of the text, we can study the distribution of miracle types in Books 1 and 2 (see figures 6.2 and 6.3). We can see that healing miracles are balanced between both parts, although they are slightly more frequent in Book 2 than in Book 1 (fourteen as opposed to twelve instances). In Book 1, the healing of possession is the most popular kind of healing miracle, whereas the healing of fever is the most popular in Book 2.

Possession Miracles

As a thaumaturgical wonder-worker, Columbanus was seen by Jonas primarily as an exorcist. There are six instances of exorcism in Book 1, and they all occur toward the end of the book, in chapters 20, 21, 22, and 25. The beneficiaries are all laity; none is a member of the saint's own community. The miracles all take place when Columbanus is on the move, after his expulsion from Burgundy and before his arrival in Italy. Exorcism miracles occur outside the monastery and the monastic environment in Book 2 but are not as frequent as in Book 1. All three instances in Book 2 occur toward the end of the book dealing with a number of Bobbio monks. All the beneficiaries are male, one being a child. Abbot Bertulf cured a man called Viaturinus when he was traveling back to

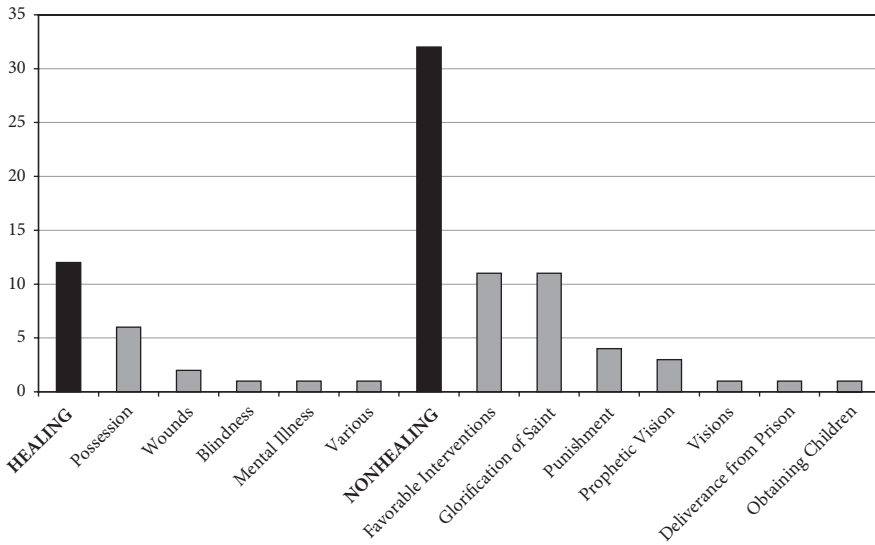


Figure 6.2. Miracles in VC Book 1.

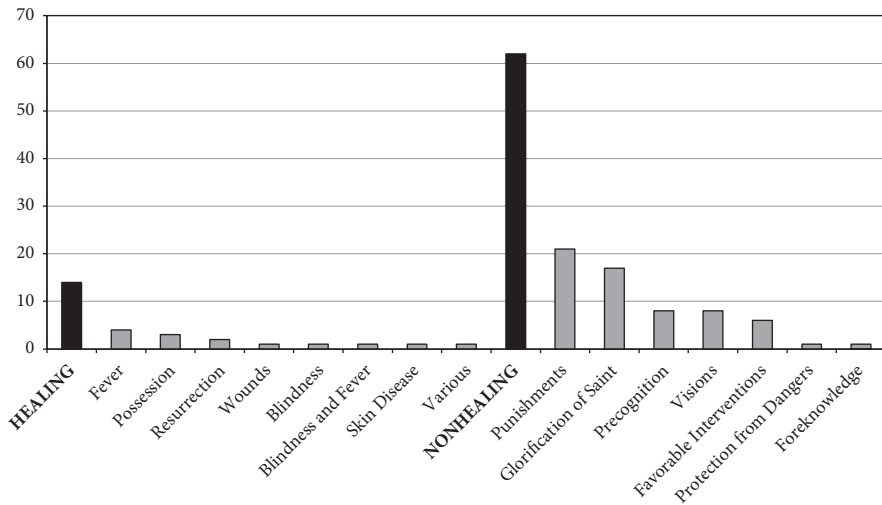


Figure 6.3. Miracles in VC Book 2.

Bobbio from Rome, where he had successfully petitioned Pope Honorius for a privilege. He did this after having prayed, although Jonas does not mention that he did so when he also healed “a child called Domnicus, the son of a certain Urbanus.”⁴⁸

48. VC 2.23: 284–285.

The most interesting case of this type of healing miracle is a triple miracle account involving an Arian assassin and a Bobbio monk, Blidulf, in Pavia.⁴⁹ Duke Ariowald, who became king of the Lombards in 626, ordered the man to kill the monk when Blidulf slighted the duke in refusing to greet him because he was an Arian heretic. After Blidulf had been beaten and left for dead, the man who had been willing to kill the monk was possessed by a demon. He then proclaimed that such punishment would befall all those who harmed the monks of Bobbio and adhered to Arianism. When Ariowald saw this, he was frightened for himself and sent the demoniac to Abbot Athala with gifts in order to make up for his offense. The abbot refused the gifts because Ariowald was a heretic, but he cured the man who had attacked his monk. In this instance, the exorcism comes about through communal prayer when the abbot asks all the community to pray for the demoniac. However, when the man returned to his home, he boasted that he had tried to kill the monk of his own free will. He was then struck by divine punishment and died.⁵⁰ This account is somewhat remarkable, as it recounts three different miracles that occurred to one person and as the exorcism is viewed as taking place through the intervention of the whole community.

We see in these examples a diversity in what Jonas tells us about how these miracles took place. In some cases, Jonas does not state that exorcisms occurred following prayer, while in others, a more physical action is required. What is noteworthy, however, is that in no instance do these types of healing miracles occur in the monastic space, nor are Columbanian monks the beneficiaries of exorcism. Rather, they occur at a distance from the monasteries, and they affect the laity; most of the possessed are male. When we compare this aspect with some other texts, we find a slightly different pattern. Although there are similarly few exorcism miracles in the *Dialogues*, the two cases in Book 2 only concern clerics. In the *Life of the Jura Fathers*, monks are also the beneficiaries of exorcism after having been possessed because of their religious pride or because they attempted to leave their monasteries.⁵¹ This text also shows a different way in which healing of the possessed could take place, when it recounts that Abbot Eugendus could heal people just by sending them a letter.⁵² In Adomnán's text, there are no instances of exorcism.

49. VC 2.24: 286–289.

50. VC 2.24: 289 (see O'Hara and Wood 2017, 232–235).

51. VPJ 33–34: 118–119; 80–81: 140.

52. VPJ 139: 166; 145: 169.

Beneficiaries of Healing Miracles and How They Are Healed

The majority of beneficiaries of healing miracles in both parts of the *Vita* are the laity, while the nonhealing miracles mostly concern the monastic communities. In two accounts in chapter 15, Jonas shows the different ways in which Columbanus healed one of his monks called Theudegisel and the priest, Winioc, who were both wounded while doing manual labor. In the first case, the monk cut off his finger with a sickle when he was helping the other monks cut the harvest. When Columbanus found out what had happened, he quickly came to him and put his saliva on the wound, and it was immediately healed.⁵³ In the next case, Winioc was looking at some monks cutting wood in the forest and marveling at the force with which they splintered the oak with wedges and a mallet, when “one of the wedges came flying from the trunk and cut him in the middle of his forehead, and drew gushing waves of blood from his veins.” Columbanus, “seeing the bone exposed and the blood streaming, at once fell on the ground in prayer. Then rising he healed the wound with his saliva so that hardly a trace of a scar remained.”⁵⁴

The first miracle of Columbanus that Jonas records takes place after the saint arrived in Gaul, when he healed the wife of a man who brought gifts of food to the community at Annegrays.⁵⁵ The man asked the saint to pray for his wife, who had been suffering from a severe fever for a year and was almost dead. Jonas notes that the saint complied because of the faith shown by the man. The saint assembled the community and prayed for God’s mercy. Although the wife was not there, we are told that she was immediately healed; when the husband returned home, he found that she had recovered exactly at the time when “the man of God entreated the Lord on her behalf.”⁵⁶ At the end of this chapter, Jonas makes a more general comment on Columbanus’s efficacy as a healer, noting that soon lots of people, including many who were sick, began to go to Annegrays in order that Columbanus might heal them. As he was unable to refuse them, “he relieved the sicknesses of all those who came to him to be cured” through prayer and because he was supported by God.⁵⁷

Athala was more reticent about healing, because he feared the popular acclaim that this would bring and the dangers of such attention. When a couple whose child was dying of fever in Milan came to him on his arrival in the city and begged him to come to their child, Athala tried to get out of it by disguising

53. VC 1.15: 177.

54. VC 1.15: 178 (O’Hara and Wood 2017, 126).

55. VC 1.7: 164–165.

56. VC 1.7: 164–165.

57. VC 1.7: 166.

himself. The parents compelled him, though, with “tears and terrible oaths,” to help their child.⁵⁸ Here the healing miracle is preceded by prayer at specific holy locations in the city. Athala’s coyness is underlined by his secret entry into the house. Jonas calls him the “dispenser of the gift” (*largitori muneris*), another reference to a miracle as being a gift.

From these descriptions of healing miracles, we can conclude that while they are much less frequent in the *VC* than in other saints’ Lives, they nevertheless show the saints working miracles that improve the human condition in this world. These miracles are, however, often removed from the monastic sphere and often occur when the saints are traveling. Even those miracles that concern the healing of monks, such as Theudegesil, take place outside the confines of the monastery. In the case of Theudegesil, the miracle happens in a field, while the priest Winioch is healed by Columbanus in the forest surrounding the monastery. There is a variety of ways in which people are healed, and in no instance is there an exorcism of a monk or a nun, which is not the case in the *Dialogues* or the *Life of the Jura Fathers*. All are *in vita* instances, which cannot be said for all cases in Gregory of Tours’s *Liber vitae patrum* or in the *Life of the Jura Fathers*. There is also a more marked tendency in both of these works for healing miracles to take place by means of relics, particularly contact relics such as the healing letters of Eugendus. We do not find this element in the *VC*.

Nonhealing Miracles

Gregory the Great had an essentially moralistic conception of miracles. For him, miracle accounts had an edifying function.⁵⁹ The same was true for Gregory of Tours, whose intent in writing his *Liber vitae patrum* was that it would strengthen the Church and provide examples that would “encourage the minds of listeners to follow.”⁶⁰ The author of the *Life of the Jura Fathers* wrote for two hermits of the monastery at Agaune, John and Armentarius, who asked him to write it. The author notes in his preface that “without spiritual nourishment,” both of the men could not devote themselves fully to their religious way of life.⁶¹ The *Vita* was a compensation for their rejection of philosophy (worldly wisdom) since they had become monks.⁶²

58. *VC* 2.4: 236.

59. On Gregory’s concept of the miraculous, see McCready 1989.

60. Gregory of Tours, *Liber vitae patrum* preface: 27.

61. *VPJ* preface: 98.

62. *VPJ* preface 184.

In VC Book 1's nonhealing miracles, the most frequent of which are miracles that glorify the saint and favorable interventions that God works both for the saint and through the saint for the community's good, are intended to show Columbanus as a *vir Dei*. Prophetic vision and visions are considerably less frequent than in Book 2 and in the *Life of Columba*, where they are the most popular type of miracle. In Book 2, the emphasis is on punishment miracles and miracles that glorify the saint, as well as prophetic vision and visions. I will consider the punishment miracles before looking at some examples of the nonhealing miracles worked by Columbanus.

Punishment Miracles in VC Book 2

Jonas opens his account of the twenty-five years after Columbanus's death with six chapters on Athala. The first chapter begins with a series of punishment miracles that sets the tone for the rest of the book. After the biographical introductory paragraph, in which Jonas tells of Athala's dissatisfaction with the lax monastic life at Lérins and his move to Luxeuil in search of "the provision of stronger counsel,"⁶³ the remainder of the chapter is taken up with relating the punishments meted out to a number of monks who "could not bear the precepts of excessive ardour" and "were unable to sustain the weight of harsh discipline."⁶⁴ When Athala was unable to keep control of them or to remind them that "the fathers attained the kingdom of heaven through mortification and contempt for the present life,"⁶⁵ he allowed the stubborn ones to leave. Jonas recounts that they "soon received punishment for their wilful temerity and arrogance" when they finally got to their places of retreat.⁶⁶

These miracle accounts also reveal a second important preoccupation of Jonas: the monastery and the world. For Jonas, they are separate entities. The monk's or nun's place is in the monastery, and dangers arise when they try to break from it. A dichotomy between the monastery and the world is most clearly seen in chapter 19, "The punishment of the wrongdoers and the damnation of the fugitives."⁶⁷ Here, as in chapter 1, it is the devil who is blamed as the root cause of the nuns' desire to flee the monastery. At Faremoutiers, the devil gave some of the novices second thoughts about the monastic life, "striving to pluck them from the company of the others and tempting them to violate the

63. VC 2.1: 230.

64. *se aiebant nimiae fervoris auctoritatem ferre non posse et arduae disciplinae pondera portare non valere*. VC 2.1: 231.

65. *meminiscerentque, patres per mortificationem et contemptum praesentis vitae regna caelorum possidere*. VC 2.1: 231.

66. See Diem forthcoming; Diem and van der Meer 2016, 25–31.

67. VC 2.19: 271.

confines of the monastery. And he cast down before them the fleeting life of the world and to desire, in the manner of dogs, to wish once more to take up the filth of their bowels.”⁶⁸ This biblical image (Proverbs 26: 11) of a dog licking up its own vomit conveys the strength of Jonas’s conviction (and one he shared with Columbanus) that once a person committed himself or herself to the monastic life, there should be no turning back. The ill nature of the undertaking is further highlighted by its taking place at night: “during the dark shadows and the silence of the black night they aspired to execute their foolish plan.” While they were trying to escape by a ladder over the monastic enclosures (*septa monasterii*), divine intervention suddenly occurred. A cylindrical fiery mass appeared from the middle of the dormitory, filling and lighting up the whole building. It divided into three balls of fire and went through all the doorways “with a great thunderous noise.” This woke up the other nuns, while those who were about to step over the *vallum*, the monastic enclosure, were terrified by the noise and wanted to return. But they physically could not. They remained on the *vallum*, unable to move, “as if they had been weighed down with lead.” This was a trick of the devil intended “to oppress those women whom the divine punishment allowed by no means to be destroyed.” The fugitives were on the boundary between the monastery and the world, and here Jonas implies that they would have been destroyed if they had left but that by means of heavenly fire, God prevented this. The devil’s power was stronger in this liminal zone, so he could temporarily stop the nuns from returning. But when the nuns realized their offense, the power of the devil could no longer have any hold on them, for “turning back to the mother, they confessed these things in confession.”⁶⁹

An essential part of being reintegrated into the community was confession, and Jonas attaches considerable importance to confession in Book 2. When Roccolenus was burning with fever, he realized his mistake and wanted to return to Athala to “assuage the evils of the crime which had been committed with the medicine of penitence.” When the other monks who had joined Roccolenus’ rebellion returned, Athala “restored them to their places as they acknowledged their faults.”⁷⁰ In the second part of chapter 19, Jonas even more dramatically narrates what can happen when the opportunity of repentance is spurned. This again involves the devil, novice nuns, and their aborted desire to escape Faremoutiers. Jonas begins by relating that the “ancient serpent” succeeded in tempting two

68. *a ceterarum conibentia nisus evellere ac septa monasterii violare temptare; praecipitavitque et exitiabilem vitam saeculi desiderare ac canino more reiecta viscerum putrimenta denuo sumere velle.* VC 2.19: 271–272.

69. VC 2.19: 272.

70. VC 2.1: 232.

nuns into not making a true confession. He then makes an important statement about the practice and function of confession at Faremoutiers: “For it was the custom of the monastery and of the Rule that each of them should purge her mind through confession three times a day, so that whatever stain the mind had attracted by its frailty, righteous exposure would wash it away.”⁷¹ The nuns’ inability to make a true confession was considered by Jonas to be the cause of their ruin (*labem*).⁷² The next action of the devil was to make them escape the monastery at night in order to return to their homes. This time, they got farther than the *vallum*. A dense fog had descended, and they were completely disorientated and could not find the way. They were further assisted by the devil, who “stood at their left hand, and, with the art of which he was capable, simulated a light in the form of a lamp, and showed the path leading back to the world, and increased their strength by his cunning.”⁷³ However, they were tricked by the devil, who led them in a circle back to the gates of the monastery.

Glorification of the Saint Miracles in VC Book 2

Jonas uses punishment miracles in Book 2 for their edifying purpose. Similarly, the miracles that glorify a saint or in which saints have visions demonstrate the rewards that would be given to those who live upright religious lives. Athala sees a vision of heaven before he dies,⁷⁴ as does the old miller of Bobbio, Agibodus, who is told by an angel that he will soon shine seven times brighter than the sun when he dies. He then tells his fellow monks that he will die that very hour and tells them what he has seen and what has been promised to him. Jonas notes: “The Reward-Giver to the saints only wished to leave this for posterity as an example, so that those who were aware that Agibodus’s crown had been promised before his death might be imitators of his purity and religion in all things.”⁷⁵ Agibodus’s vision of heaven was meant to be edifying to the other monks. This is the same intention with Jonas’s description of the miraculous deaths of the pious nuns at Faremoutiers and the visions they see before their deaths which so recalls Book 4 of Gregory’s *Dialogues*.

71. *Erat enim consuetudinis monasterii et regulae, ut ter in die per confessionem unaquaeque earum mentem purgaret, et qualemcumque rugam mens fragilitate adtraxisset, pia proditio ablueret.* VC 2.19: 272 (O’Hara and Wood 2017, 220).

72. *ne vera confessio per paenitentiae medicamenta rursus redderet sospitati.* VC 2.19: 273 (O’Hara and Wood 2017, 220).

73. *astitit ad levam diabolus ac lumen in modum lucernae arte qua valuit assimilavit monstravitque viam ad saeculum reducem ac tergiversatione vires auxit.* VC 2.19: 273 (O’Hara and Wood 2017, 220).

74. VC 2.6: 240.

75. VC 2.25: 291 (O’Hara and Wood 2017, 237).

Glorification of the Saint and Favorable Intervention
Miracles in VC Book 1

Miracles that glorify the saint and show God's favorable intervention for the saint and his community are the most frequent type of nonhealing miracle in Book 1. All of these miracles in the *VC* are *in vita* occurrences, while there are only a few examples of posthumous miracles in the *VJ* and the *VV*.

When Columbanus orders a bear to leave its den or to stop eating half of a grove of fruit trees and the bear willingly complies,⁷⁶ these are miracles that are meant to glorify Columbanus. Similarly, when Columbanus blows into a vat full of beer and shatters it, this also shows the power of the saint. The vat of beer was intended by pagan Suebi to be drunk as libations to Woden, but the saint intervened.⁷⁷ When Columbanus miraculously becomes invisible to his pursuers who wish to expel him from his monastery at Luxeuil, this is an example of a favorable intervention that God works to help Columbanus.⁷⁸ This is also the case when the boat carrying Columbanus and his monks into exile miraculously changes its course to dock at Tours after Columbanus implored his custodians to let him visit the shrine of Saint Martin and they refused.⁷⁹ We also see the saint working miracles that help his monks, as at Fontaine, when he multiplies bread and beer for his hungry community, recalling Christ's multiplication of the bread and the fish.⁸⁰ These are just some examples of the nonhealing miracles in Book 1 that demonstrate that Columbanus was a man of God. Prophetic vision and visions are not as frequent here as they are in the *Life of Columba* and Book 2 of the *Dialogues*. In one instance, Columbanus knew that two of his monks did not bring back all the fish they had caught, because two fish had been found dead in the net, and ordered them to return to get the two dead fish they had left behind, while later in the *VC*, he has foreknowledge of the battle being fought between kings Theuderic and Theudebert.⁸¹

MIRACLE ACCOUNTS IN THE *VITA IOHANNIS* AND
 THE *VITA VEDASTIS*

While the *VJ* and the *VV* are more conventional saints' Lives, the miracle accounts in both do offer some interesting insights. In general, the miracle

76. *VC* 1.8: 167; 1.27: 216.

77. *VC* 1.27: 213–214. See *VV* 7: 315.

78. *VC* 1.20: 194.

79. *VC* 1.22: 201.

80. *VC* 1.17: 183.

81. *VC* 1.28: 218–219.

accounts in the *VJ* and the *VV* are more muted than in the *VC*, we do not find the same exclamatory remarks in relation to these accounts that we find in the *VC*, and a more limited vocabulary is used to describe the miraculous. Jonas uses the term *virtutes* in the preface to the *VJ*, *miracula* in chapter 16, and *solamina* in chapter 20, while in the *VV*, he uses *virtus*, *miraculum*, and *monumentum*.⁸² As in the *VC*, the majority of miracle accounts in the *VJ* and the *VV* are nonhealing. The short *VV*, for example, contains nine miracle accounts, six of which are nonhealing, while out of a total of twelve miracle accounts in the *VJ*, eight are nonhealing (See tables 6.6. and 6.7.).

In contrast to the *VC*, however, both of these saints' Lives contain posthumous miracle accounts that concern where the saints should be buried. Jonas's account of the burial of Bishop Vedast is noteworthy for reflecting the new changes in burial practices brought about by the development in the cult of the saints. Vedast had a conventional Roman view that no dead should be buried within the city walls and expressed a desire that he should be buried in a little oratory he had built outside the city walls of Arras. When he died, however, his wishes were not respected, for it was decided that he should be buried in the cathedral—but initially the body of the saint was reluctant to move.⁸³ There is a similar account in the *VJ*, where Jonas recounts that Abbot Leubardinus of Réomé translated the relics of John in the abbatial church. Like Vedast's, the body of the saint refused to be moved.⁸⁴ The response of the abbot in this case was to order a three-day fast. On the third day, an old man entered the church and saw a vision of the saint and the second abbot, Silvester, standing in front of the sepulcher. The old man was obviously not an ecclesiastic, as his presence provoked a harsh response from the saint. "Why," he said, "have you dared to enter the church?"⁸⁵ He was then instructed to tell the abbot and the brothers that they could now finish the task of moving the tomb. Jonas notes that at the tomb of John, the sick are healed and petitions are answered, which suggests that Réomé became a place of pilgrimage for the surrounding area.⁸⁶

But throughout the work, we find a strong emphasis on the healing power of the Eucharist, which is also found in Columbanus's injunction that each monk was required to wear the consecrated host around his neck in a chrismal and in the anonymous *Regula cuiusdam patris*, also written in a Columbanian milieu, although it has been argued that it was written as a critical response

82. *VV* 4: 312; 7: 315; 10: 318, respectively.

83. *VV* 9: 317–318. See the comments in O'Hara and Wood 2017, 275 n. 53.

84. *VJ* 20: 343–344.

85. *VJ* 20: 343 (O'Hara and Wood 2017, 264).

86. *VJ* 20: 344.

to some Columbanian practices.⁸⁷ This preeminence given to the Eucharist is very evident in the final miracle account, already mentioned, in which John and Silvester, the two first abbots, appear to an old man who had entered the church and tell him that the community can now translate John's tomb next to the altar, "where the host of Christ is offered and where the office of prayers is fulfilled, and where the cures of the sick, and the consolations of boons for their prayers are granted."⁸⁸ Jonas's focus on the Eucharist and the intercessory prayer of the brothers implies that the miracles performed in the church are to be associated with the altar and the Eucharist, not exclusively with the relics of the saint. The healing power of the Eucharist is also stressed in the miracle account in which John saved a man from death by sending him the Eucharist and his prayers. Jonas's account of the haughty layman Agrestius, who comes to Réomé to attend Mass but leaves in a huff and returns home after John orders all the laity present to leave the church for the consecration, also centers on this:

He [Agrestius] goes home with the innermost part of his heart puffed up with pride, and there in the dead of night, wrapped in his bedding, he sees the venerable man, bearing the treasure of the Eucharist in his right hand, stand before his bed and say to him as a rebuke: "Look," he said, "Agrestius, had you not blasphemed yesterday, although you would not have received the sacrament of the Eucharist physically, it would have been offered to you spiritually: now, therefore, because you presumed to blaspheme, it is spiritually denied to you."⁸⁹

Jonas's use of the name Agrestius for this proud layman was clearly intended to remind his readers of the villain of the same name in Book 2 of the VC. The fact that the character has the same name is not proof that the narrative of the VJ is entirely fictitious. It is perfectly possible that the two men came from the same family in Burgundy. Manuscripts B and C of the VJ add, "Nor should anyone think this is a tall story, that we relate: we learnt it from the venerable man, the deacon Agripinus, who was himself the son of Agrestius." They also add the comment that this Agrestius was a citizen of Mesmont, presumably the village of that name in the Côte d'Or of Burgundy. As Ian Wood has noted, the additions to these manuscripts suggest that an early redactor had access to some local tradition at Réomé.⁹⁰

87. See Diem forthcoming, with a translation of the Rule.

88. VJ 20.

89. VJ 9 (O'Hara and Wood 2017, 253–254).

90. See O'Hara and Wood 2017, 253 n. 82.

Diem has also commented on the spatial elements of this episode and its similarities to the clear concerns of Jonas in the VC to restrict lay access to the inner areas of the monastic space and Jonas's imposition of Columbanian concepts of sacred space on the Gallic monastic tradition of John's sixth-century Réomé.⁹¹ In the contemporary early-sixth-century *Life of the Jura Fathers*, we do not find any such concerns about lay access to monastic space or attendance at Mass. Jonas has imposed Columbanus's and his contemporary standards on the older monastic tradition, perhaps to remind the reformed community of Réomé that they are now part of this new tradition. The spatial element is emphasized in the very first miracle account, in which John settles on the site of his future monastery where a poisonous snake inhabits a well (*puteus*), which John duly finds dead after praying and stirring the well before throwing it "a long way from the place."⁹² One of the aims of the *VJ* is to model the zeal of the first desert monks, particularly Antony, and this miracle account has parallels with the *Vita Antonii*, as Diem has discussed in detail.⁹³ Water from this well is later sent by John to heal a man struck by plague. Jonas notes in this miracle account that the well was situated "within the enclosure of the monastery" (*inter septa caenubii sui situs erat*),⁹⁴ again emphasizing the ideology of Columbanian monasticism.

A number of miracle accounts in the *VJ* can be dated and give insights into the social role of the monastery. Jonas mentions the Italian invasion of Theudebert I, which took place in 539, and that at this time, the brother of a sick man went to John to seek help.⁹⁵ The saint prayed and gave the man some flour mixed with water (*paximacium*) with five apples to take back to his brother.⁹⁶ When the man went home, he divided the gift into three parts and mixed it with wine. When his brother drank the concoction, he recovered his health. The word used here, *paximacium*, for the wafer of the Eucharist is a borrowing from Cassian and appears also in Columbanus's monastic legislation.⁹⁷ Another unusual healing miracle involves a man afflicted by a bad ulcer during the plague of 543. He asked that some water from the well at Réomé which had been blessed by the saint be brought to him to drink.⁹⁸

We can also read miracle accounts in the *VJ* as valuable social documents. The case of a slave who fled to the monastery after committing a crime gives

91. Diem 2008.

92. *VJ* 2.

93. Diem 2008, 24.

94. *VJ* 17.

95. *VJ* 15: 337–338.

96. *VJ* 15: 338.

97. See Columbanus, *RM* 3: 126 (*pane paxemati*). Noted by de Vogüé 2007, 84.

98. *VJ* 17: 340.

an insight into the monastery as a place of sanctuary. When a messenger was sent with a letter from John to the slave's master, Clarus, asking him to pardon the man, we are told that Clarus destroyed John's letter, spat on it, and expelled the messenger in anger. Punishment duly followed that deprived him of taking the Eucharist: "Divine vengeance followed without delay! It vehemently struck Clarus's mouth and throat, so that for a long period of time he could neither take the nourishment of bread nor the sacrament of the holy body."⁹⁹

There are a number of other accounts in which people who have been healed enter the service or become members of the community. A slave of an imperial administrator called Nicasius was cured of a demon by John and remained in the service of the monastery for a number of years,¹⁰⁰ while a young demoniac who was healed became a monk in the community.¹⁰¹

While the *VJ* contains twelve miracle accounts, the *VV* only has nine, two of which are posthumous. Jonas presents Vedast as the model ascetic-bishop for the new Columbanian monk-bishops who occupied many of the sees of Neustria after the unification of the kingdoms under Chlothar II in 613. In contrast to the predominance of healing miracles worked by the saintly bishops in the hagiography of Gregory of Tours that are horizontal-type accounts (concerning man's condition on earth) and emphasize the bishop's important role in society as a patron and mediator, we see a predominance of nonhealing miracles in Jonas's account of Vedast.

Vedast's first miracle was the healing of a blind man whom he met when traveling with King Clovis. Jonas notes that the man was healed by Vedast making the sign of the cross with his right hand over the man's eyes and that a basilica was later built on the site where this miracle took place.¹⁰²

Vedast's appointment as bishop of Arras signaled a spate of miracles, the most interesting of which took place at a feast hosted by one of Chlothar I's nobles. Jonas notes that the bishop attended the feast in order to preach to the courtiers. But on entering the house of the noble, the bishop saw a huge vat of beer in the middle of the house was intended as a pagan libation: "Asking about it, he enquired why they wished to have barrels placed in the middle of the house, and the reply was that some were for Christians and others indeed were set out for pagans, dedicated in heathen fashion (*gentile ritu*)."¹⁰³ Vedast

99. *VJ* 10: 335 (O'Hara and Wood 2017, 254).

100. *VJ* 11: 335–336.

101. *VJ* 12: 356.

102. *VV* 3: 311.

made the sign of the cross on the vat, and it broke. Then the bishop preached to the gathering, and many became Christian.¹⁰³ This miracle account shows Vedast as an evangelizer specifically addressing the Merovingian court. It is important because it has a near parallel in the VC, where Columbanus comes across pagans in Alamannia who have a similar vat of beer intended as a libation for Woden. The vat is likewise smashed after Columbanus has made the sign of the cross over it, and he then preaches to a mixed group of baptized Christians and pagans.¹⁰⁴ In his interaction with the nobles assembled at the feast for Chlothar I, Vedast behaves much like Columbanus in confronting the social practices of elite feasting. Jonas no doubt sought to critique elite drinking practices while drawing parallels between Vedast and Columbanus for the episcopal audience of the *Life* who would have been well aware of these allusions.

Both accounts present Vedast and Columbanus as missionary figures, in keeping with the expansion of Frankish ecclesiastical and secular influence in Flanders and Alamannia, respectively, at the time of Jonas's writing. However, just as in the case of Columbanus, clear boundaries are drawn between Vedast and the sphere of the royal court, which Jonas was also critical of in the VC. And, as we have observed in relation to the VC, Jonas does not identify with the Franks in any way in the VV. As Jamie Kreiner has noted, the differences between Alcuin's later rewriting of the *Vita*, in which he makes the Franks a sacred *gens*, are clear, in that Jonas was simply not interested in presenting them in this way.¹⁰⁵ Indeed, in the VJ, we can even detect some critical detachment in his curt note on the Franks' invasion of northern Italy in 539: "And now when the kings of the Franks subjected the provinces of Gaul to the rule of their government, having removed the jurisdiction of the Empire, and having set aside the domination of the Roman State [*res publica*], and were delighting in their own power, it happened that Theudebert the son of Theuderic, the son of Clovis, made war on Italy, and having crossed the Alps, harassed Italy."¹⁰⁶ Jonas's use of the term *res publica* for the Roman state is anachronistic, but his views reflect a more Roman/Byzantine perspective on the overthrow of imperial power in Italy that mirrors that of Procopius and no doubt reflects

103. VV 7: 314–316 (O'Hara and Wood 2017, 273 and n. 40).

104. VC 1.27: 213–214.

105. Kreiner 2014b, 242.

106. VJ 15 (O'Hara and Wood 2017, 257 and n. 109).

his own Italian perspective.¹⁰⁷ It is strikingly different from that in Gregory of Tours, although the term *res publica* is also found in the letters of Gregory the Great.¹⁰⁸

The spatial element is another feature of the miracle accounts in the VV that it shares with Jonas's other works. From accompanying the victorious Clovis to his baptism at Rheims after defeating the Alamannians, where he heals a blind man on the way, mirroring the spiritual enlightenment of the king, Vedast's miracles are part of his *adventus* in his assumption of episcopal office in Arras, which sees him healing a blind man and a cripple on entering the city. He then expels a bear from the city limits, ordering it never to return, a miracle that mirrors Columbanus's expulsion of the bear from his hermitage near Annegray.

But the whole focus and drive of the VV are concerned with the final resting place of the saint's body and the bed relic on which he died and which was not touched when a fire burned the little house. The reference to the bed relic and to the little cell indicates that this was one of the foci of the cult at the cathedral in addition to his tomb shrine. Bed relics are ideal contact relics, and they are a distinctive feature of the cult of the saints in the Early Middle Ages.¹⁰⁹ The final posthumous miracle accounts clearly show that the VV was written to promote the cult of Vedast in the Arras cathedral. However, it is typical of Jonas that he does not mention any miracles taking place in relation to people at the tomb or at the bed relic; he records no healing miracles in relation to these foci, which is in keeping with his emphasis on living sanctity. This is also very much the case in the VJ, which, despite being much longer than the VV, has in general fewer miracle accounts in proportion to its length. This is perhaps because the VJ is foremost a contemplative meditation on the role of the ideal abbot.

To conclude, there are considerable similarities and parallels in the miracle accounts that Jonas used in all three of his saints' Lives, which justify

107. See Procopius, *Wars* 7.33.

108. See DLH 3.32. Thomas Charles-Edwards notes that the term *res publica* is also found in the *Austrasian Letters* (*Epistulae Austrasiacae*) (e.g., no. 28, Childebert II to Athanagild; no. 29, Brunhild to Empress Anastasia) and in the letters of Gregory the Great, but this is not surprising, given the close connections between the Austrasian court and the papacy under Gregory the Great with the Eastern Roman Empire. I am grateful to Thomas Charles-Edwards on this point.

109. Bartlett 2013, 247.

studying the miracle accounts as a distinct body of work. In predominantly narrating *in vita* and nonhealing miracles, Jonas reflects the same tendencies of other seventh-century hagiographers (both in Ireland and on the Continent) who emphasized a monastic, active sanctity focused on vertical miracles that stressed the saint's relationship with the transcendent. This is symptomatic of a much broader cultural shift from the world of Gregory of Tours—a world of relics and intercession at the tombs of the saints—to a much more dynamic, living sanctity that focused on the individual and the community. Jonas's focus is on choreographed ritual communities rather than the Late Antique amnesty of the saint's power conducted through relics. This was a mode of sanctity that demanded full individual and collective responsibility for the work of salvation. The miracle accounts in Jonas reflect to some extent these broader cultural and religious transformations of the seventh century. At the same time, by showing how the function of miracle accounts can change within single texts and between near contemporaneous texts, different rhetorical strategies, and different concerns within a single culture are revealed—also reflecting diversity with particular historical moments.

By categorizing miracle accounts according to their functions and by applying the methodology pioneered by Derouet and Sigal, it is possible for the historian to trace changes in ideas of the holy over time, while identifying in a more systematic way the authorial plumbing of those whose task it was to write these accounts. It becomes clear from studying Jonas's miracle accounts that this trend is largely as short-lived as the Columbanian monastic movement itself. By the Carolingian period, the saints were firmly back in their tombs—dead saints were more manageable.

Table 6.1. Miracle accounts in Book 1 of the *Vita Columbani*.

Chapter	Healing/ Nonhealing	Type	Beneficiary	Place
7	Healing	Fever	Wife of man who brought food	Monastery (Annegray)
7	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention/ animals	Monastic community (horses bringing food find their own way to monastery)	En route to Annegray (in Vosges)
8	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Columbanus (commanded bear to leave cave)	Cave near Annegray
9	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Columbanus and Domoal (water produced from rock)	Cave near Annegray
11	Nonhealing	Precognition, foreknowledge	Columbanus and two monks (rebuked for bringing back three fish instead of five)	Vosges wilderness
11	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Columbanus and Gall	Vosges wilderness
12	Nonhealing	Prophetic vision	Columbanus	Cave near Annegray
12	Healing	Various	Monastic community	Luxeuil
12	Nonhealing	Punishment	Monastic community	Luxeuil
13	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Monastic community	Fontaine
14	Nonhealing	Obtaining children	Waldelenus and Flavia (nobles)	Monastery (unspecified)
15	Healing	Wound	Theudegisil (monk)	Baniaritia field near Luxeuil
15	Healing	Wound	Winioc (priest)	Forest near Luxeuil
15	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Columbanus (stolen glove returned by raven)	Luxeuil
16	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Cellarer (loss of beer prevented by his obedience)	Cellar in monastery (unspecified)
17	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Monastic community	Fredemungiacas field
17	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Monastic community	Granary at Luxeuil
17	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention/ obtaining food	Sixty monks	Fontaine

Table 6.1. Continued

Chapter	Healing/ Nonhealing	Type	Beneficiary	Place
17	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Columbanus monk (death prolonged by saint's prayers)	Luxeuil
17	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Columbanus (wild animals come at his command)	Vosges wilderness
19	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Theuderic and Brunhild (vessels containing food and drink shattered)	Royal villa at Époisses
19	Nonhealing	Deliverance from prison	Men condemned to death	Prison in Besançon
19	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Fugitives seeking sanctuary in church	Outside the doors of church in Besançon
20	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Columbanus (becomes invisible to his enemies)	Vestibule in Luxeuil
20	Nonhealing	Punishment	One of Theuderic's horsemen	En route to Avallon
20	Healing	Possession	One of Theuderic's horsemen	En route to Avallon
20	Healing	Possession	Twelve men	House of Theudemande, a religious noblewoman
20	Healing	Mental illness	Five men	Cora village
21	Healing	Possession	Young man	Outside Auxerre
21	Nonhealing	Punishment	One of the guards (later drowned)	Harbor on the Loire at Nevers
21	Healing	Blindness	Husband of Syrian woman	Orléans
21	Healing	Possession	Crowd of demoniacs	Orléans
22	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Columbanus (wanted to visit shrine of Saint Martin)	Boat on Loire near Tours
22	Nonhealing	Punishment	Monastic community (stolen gold returned)	Tours
22	Healing	Possession	Mother and daughter	Nantes
23	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Columbanus (boat prevented by waves from leaving)	Loire estuary
25	Healing	Possession	A man	Paris city gates

(continued)

Table 6.1. Continued

Chapter	Healing/ Nonhealing	Type	Beneficiary	Place
27	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Monastic community (food obtained)	Church in Mainz
27	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Pagan Swabians	Bregenz
27	Nonhealing	Favorable interventions	Monastic community	Bregenz
27	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Columbanus and Chagnoald	Cave in wilderness near Bregenz
27	Nonhealing	Vision	Columbanus	Bregenz
28	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Columbanus and Chagnoald	Wilderness near Bregenz
30	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Monastic community	Forest near Bobbio

Table 6.2. Miracle accounts in Book 2 of the *Vita Columbani*.

Chapter	Healing or Nonhealing	Type	Beneficiary	Place
1	Nonhealing	Punishment	Roccolenus	Marine hiding places and deserted areas
1	Nonhealing	Punishment	Theudemund (killed by ax)	Marine hiding places and deserted areas
1	Nonhealing	Punishment	Rebel monk (foot got caught in net and killed by waves)	Marine hiding places and deserted areas
1	Nonhealing	Punishment	Theutharius (drowned)	Marine hiding places and deserted areas
2	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Monastic community	River in Bobbio
3	Healing	Wound	Fraimer (monk)	Bobbio
4	Healing	Fever	Small boy	House in Milan
5	Nonhealing	Precognition	Athala	Bobbio
5	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Jonas himself	Parental home in Susa
6	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Athala (sees vision of Heaven)	Outside his cell in Bobbio
7	Healing	Blindness and fever	Burgundofara	Parental home near Meaux
8	Healing	Blindness	Sadalberga	Parental home in Meuse area

Table 6.2. Continued

Chapter	Healing or Nonhealing	Type	Beneficiary	Place
8	Healing	Fever	Agilus (monk)	En route to Luxeuil
10	Nonhealing	Punishment	Two monks	
10	Nonhealing	Punishment	Plaureius (monk)	
10	Nonhealing	Punishment	More than fifty	Remiremont
10	Nonhealing	Punishment	Agrestius	
10	Nonhealing	Vision	Eustasius	Luxeuil
11	Nonhealing	Precognition	Sisetrude	Faremoutiers
11	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Sisetrude	Faremoutiers
11	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Monastic community	Faremoutiers
11	Nonhealing	Vision	Two youths	Faremoutiers
12	Nonhealing	Precognition	Gibitrudis	Faremoutiers
12	Nonhealing	Punishment	Gibitrudis nanny	Parental home
12	Nonhealing	Punishment	Gibitrudis father	Parental home
12	Healing	Fever	Gibitrudis father	Parental home
12	Healing	Fever	Burgundofara	Faremoutiers
12	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Gibitrude	Faremoutiers
12	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Gibitrude	Faremoutiers
13	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Ercantrude	Faremoutiers
13	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Ercantrude	Faremoutiers
13	Nonhealing	Vision	Ercantrude	Faremoutiers
14	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Augnofleda	Faremoutiers
15	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Deurechilda	Faremoutiers
15	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Deurechilda	Faremoutiers
15	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Deurechilda's mother	Faremoutiers
16	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Domma	Choir in Faremoutiers
16	Nonhealing	Punishment	Domma	Faremoutiers
16	Nonhealing	Punishment	Two little girls	Faremoutiers
16	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	One of the little girls	Faremoutiers
16	Nonhealing	Precognition	Two young girls	Faremoutiers
17	Nonhealing	Precognition	Willesuinda	Faremoutiers
17	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Willesuinda	Faremoutiers
17	Nonhealing	Punishment	Aega	Unspecified
17	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	A bad nun	Faremoutiers
17	Nonhealing	Vision	Wilsinde	Death bed at Faremoutiers
18	Nonhealing	Precognition	Leudeberta	Faremoutiers

(continued)

Table 6.2. Continued

Chapter	Healing or Nonhealing	Type	Beneficiary	Place
18	Nonhealing	Vision	Leudeberta	Faremoutiers
19	Nonhealing	Punishment	Rebel nuns	Faremoutiers
19	Nonhealing	Punishment	Two young nuns	Faremoutiers
19	Nonhealing	Vision	Two young nuns	Faremoutiers
19	Nonhealing	Punishment	Two young nuns	Graveyard of Faremoutiers
20	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Landeberga	Faremoutiers
21	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Bithilda	Faremoutiers
21	Healing	Various	Certain women (healed by oil)	Unspecified
21	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Monastic community	Faremoutiers
22	Nonhealing	Punishment	Noble girl (nun)	Faremoutiers
22	Nonhealing	Vision	Noble girl	Refectory
22	Nonhealing	Punishment	Beractrude	Faremoutiers
23	Nonhealing	Vision	Bertulf	Fortress of Bismantova
23	Healing	Possession	Viaturinus	Near Bobbio
23	Healing	Possession	Domnicus	Bobbio
23	Healing	Skin disease (leprosy)	Leper	
24	Healing	Resurrection	Blidulf	
24	Nonhealing	Punishment	Assassin	
24	Healing	Possession	Assassin	Bobbio
24	Nonhealing	Punishment	Assassin	
25	Nonhealing	Protection from danger	Meroveus (waters refused him)	River Staffora
25	Nonhealing	Punishment	Temple disciples	
25	Nonhealing	Glorification	Agibodus	Bobbio
25	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Monastic community (Baudacharius)	
25	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Leubardus	
25	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Leubardus and Meroveus	
25	Healing	Resurrection	Meroveus	Tortona
25	Nonhealing	Precognition	Agibodus	Bobbio
25	Nonhealing	Precognition	Theudoald	Bobbio

Table 6.3. Miracle accounts in Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*.

Book 1 chapter	Healing or Nonhealing	Type	Beneficiary	Place
1	Healing	Various	Unspecified	
1	Nonhealing	Protection from danger	Horrible devils	Iona
1	Nonhealing	Protection from danger	Wild beasts	
1	Nonhealing	Protection from danger	Storm	At sea
1	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Columba	Returning from the region of the Picts
1	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Unspecified	At sea
1	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Columba	King Bridei's court; Pictland
1	Healing	Resurrection	Son of a Christian layman	Pictland
1	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Water turned into wine	
1	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Columba	
1	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Columba	
1	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Columba	
1	Nonhealing	Precognition	Many people	
1	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Kings in battle (ex. of Oswald)	
1	Nonhealing	Protection from danger	Certain brigands	House of singers
1	Nonhealing	Punishment	Certain brigands who refused to sing songs in praise of saint	House of singers
2	Nonhealing	Precognition	Fintan	Iona
3	Nonhealing	Precognition	Ernéne	Clonmacnoise
3	Nonhealing	Precognition	Monastic community	Clonmacnoise
3	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Columba, saw angelic visitations	Clonmacnoise
4	Nonhealing	Precognition	Cainnech	Iona
5	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Colman	Iona
6	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Cormac	
7	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	In presence of King Conall mac Comgaill	
8	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	King Aedan	Iona
9	Nonhealing	Precognition	King Aedan	
10	Nonhealing	Precognition	Domnall mac Aedo	Druim Cett
11	Nonhealing	Precognition	Scandlan mac Colmain	Druim Cett

(continued)

Table 6.3. Continued

Book 1 chapter	Healing or Nonhealing	Type	Beneficiary	Place
12	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Two monks	District of Ardnamurchan
13	Nonhealing	Precognition	Oengus	Iona
14	Nonhealing	Precognition	Aed Slaine	Ireland
15	Nonhealing	Precognition	King Rhydderch	
16	Nonhealing	Precognition	Meldan	Iona
16	Nonhealing	Precognition	Glasderc	Iona
17	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Colgu's mother	Iona
17	Nonhealing	Precognition	Colgu	Iona
18	Nonhealing	Precognition	Trenan, monk	Iona
19	Nonhealing	Precognition	Berach	Iona
19	Nonhealing	Precognition	Baithene	Iona
20	Nonhealing	Precognition	Baetan	Iona
21	Nonhealing	Precognition	Neman	Hinba
22	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Monastic community	Church, Iona
22	Nonhealing	Precognition	Monastic community	Iona
22	Nonhealing	Precognition	Monastic community	Iona
23	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Baithene	Iona
24	Nonhealing	Precognition	Luigbe	Sitting by fire in monastery
25	Nonhealing	Precognition	Servant Diarmait	Raised hut, Iona
26	Nonhealing	Precognition	Monastic community	Iona
27	Nonhealing	Precognition	Monastic community	Iona
28	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Luigbe	Iona
29	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Monastic community	Iona
30	Nonhealing	Precognition	Servant Diarmait	Top of hill overlooking monastery
31	Nonhealing	Precognition	Cailtan	Iona
32	Nonhealing	Precognition	Two pilgrim brothers	Iona
33	Nonhealing	Precognition	Companions	Skye
34	Nonhealing	Precognition	Servant Diarmait	Other side of Druim Alban
35	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Colgu mac Cellaig	In hut
36	Nonhealing	Precognition	Findchan	
36	Nonhealing	Precognition	Aed Dub	
37	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention (spiritual refreshment)	Monastic community	On way back from harvest

Table 6.3. Continued

Book 1 chapter	Healing or Nonhealing	Type	Beneficiary	Place
37	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint (voice traveling)	Columba	Choir
38	Nonhealing	Precognition	Lugaid the Lamé	Ireland
39	Nonhealing	Precognition	Neman	
40	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Priest	Ireland
41	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Monastic community	Iona
41	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Baithene	Iona
42	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Monks	Beside Lough Key
43	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Luigbe moccu Blai	Iona
43	Nonhealing	Precognition	Luigbe	Iona
44	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Cronan	By the altar, Iona
45	Nonhealing	Precognition	Ernan	Iona
46	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Layman	Coire Salchain
47	Nonhealing	Precognition	Guaire	
48	Nonhealing	Precognition	Monk	Iona
48	Nonhealing	Precognition	Monk	Iona
49	Nonhealing	Precognition	Comgall	Dun Cethirn
50	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Rich man	On way home from meeting with the kings
50	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Wise and greedy man	On way home from meeting with the kings
50	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Diarmait	Church of Cell
Book 2 chapter	Healing or Nonhealing	Type	Beneficiary	Place
2	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Fruit tree	Durrow
3	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Layman farmer Findchan	Delcros/near Iona
4	Nonhealing	Precognition	Silnan monk	Sitting on low hill on Iona
4	Nonhealing	Precognition	Silnan monk	Iona
4	Healing	Not identified	Six men	Between river Delvin and Dublin
4	Healing	Not identified	Men and beasts	Same
5	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Lugaid	Iona
5	Nonhealing	Precognition	Lugaid	Iona
5	Healing	Broken hip	Mogain	Clochar

(continued)

Table 6.3. Continued

Book 2 chapter	Healing or Nonhealing	Type	Beneficiary	Place
7	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Wall of house saved from fire	
8	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint (posthumous)	One page of a book	River Boyne
9	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Eogenan	Leinster
10	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Boy to be baptized (drew water from rock)	On a journey near Ardnamurchan
10	Nonhealing	Precognition	Ligu Cenncalad	Ardnamurchan
11	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Cursed well	Pictland
12	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Calms storm	At sea
13	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Calms storm with help of St. Cainnech	At sea
14	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Staff of Cainnech returned to him on Islay	Islay
15	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Two monks get following winds	Iona
16	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Pail of milk	Iona
16	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Pail of milk filled up	Iona
17	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Milk turned into blood	
17	Healing	Near death	Bull	
18	Healing	Bleeding	Young man Luigne	
19	Nonhealing	Precognition	Fishermen	River Shiel
19	Nonhealing	Precognition	Companions	Lough Key
20	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Nesan	
20	Nonhealing	Precognition	Vigen	
21	Nonhealing	Precognition	Farmer Colman	
21	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Cattle exceeding number of 105 always died	
22	Nonhealing	Punishment	Robbers of Colman	Sharp bay, Ardnamurchan

Table 6.3. Continued

Book 2 chapter	Healing or Nonhealing	Type	Beneficiary	Place
23	Nonhealing	Punishment	Killer of Taran	
24	Nonhealing	Protection from danger	Cowl of saint protects one of the monks	Island of Hinba
24	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Predicts death of attempted assassin	
25	Nonhealing	Punishment	Killer of girl who sought protection from clerics	Leinster
26	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Boar dies on spot on command of saint	Skye in dense forest
27	Nonhealing	Protection from danger	Monster in River Ness told to go back, Luigne swims safely	River Ness
28	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Island protected from poison	Iona
29	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Blessed knife of one of the monks	Iona
30	Healing	Unspecified, near death	Diarmait	Iona
30	Nonhealing	Precognition	Diarmait	Iona
31	Healing	Unspecified	Young Fintan	Druim Alban
31	Nonhealing	Precognition	Fintan	Druim Alban
32	Healing	Resurrection	Boy of recently converted Picts	Pictland
33	Nonhealing	Punishment	Broichan wizard	King Bridei's house
33	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge		
33	Healing	Not identified	Broichan	
34	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Wind turns to help Columba	Loch Ness
35	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Gates of Bridei's fort open by themselves	Bridei's fort
36	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Doors of Terryglass church open	Ireland
37	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Beggar man	
38	Nonhealing	Precognition	Monk	Iona

(continued)

Table 6.3. Continued

Book 2 chapter	Healing or Nonhealing	Type	Beneficiary	Place
38	Nonhealing	Precognition	Monastic community	Iona
39	Nonhealing	Precognition	Libran	Iona
39	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Boat turned back	Derry
39	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Boat gets following wind	Derry
39	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Columba	Iona
39	Nonhealing	Precognition	Libran's future death	Iona
40	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Girl and difficult childbirth	Iona/Ireland
41	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Luigne, who was ugly and whose wife did not want to sleep with him	Rathlin island
42	Nonhealing	Precognition	Cormac	Other side of Druim Alban
42	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Monastic community	Iona
42	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Monastic community	Iona
42	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Boat turned back through prayer	At sea in northerly regions
43	Nonhealing	Protection from dangers	Columba's chariot	Ireland traveling
44	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention (posthumous)	Rain stopped drought	Iona
45	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention (posthumous)	Contrary winds changed, monastic community	Iona
45	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention (posthumous)	Author himself and community	Eilean Shona
45	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention (posthumous)	Author himself	Island of Saine
46	Nonhealing	Protection from danger (plague) (posthumous)	Author himself and companions	On visit to King Aldfrith in England

Table 6.3. Continued

Book 3 chapter	Healing or Nonhealing	Type	Beneficiary	Place
1	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Mother of saint	Ireland
2	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Foster father Cruithnechan	Ireland
3	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	St. Brendan	Teltown
4	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Uinniau	Ireland
5	Nonhealing	Vision	Columba	Hinba
5	Nonhealing	Punishment	Columba (from angel)	Hinba
5	Nonhealing	Precognition	Aedan's descendants	Iona
5	Nonhealing	Precognition	Aedan's descendants	Iona
6	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Columba sees angels fighting demons	Iona
7	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Columba	Iona
8	Nonhealing	Protection from danger	Angels help Columba	Iona
8	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Devils go to Tíree, Columba tells monks	Iona
8	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Columba	Iona
9	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Columba	Iona
10	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Columba	Iona
10	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Columba	Iona
11	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Columba and Diarmait	Iona in early morning
12	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Monastic community	Iona
13	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Monastic community	Iona
13	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Comgall's monks attacked by demons	Belfast Lough
14	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Columba over dying heathen man	By the side of Loch Ness
15	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Columba	Iona
15	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Sends angel to man falling	Iona/Durrow
16	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Man sees angels with Columba	Iona by the Machair
16	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Columba and man who spied	Iona
17	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	St. Brendan	Altar on Hinba

(continued)

Table 6.3. Continued

Book 3 chapter	Healing or Nonhealing	Type	Beneficiary	Place
18	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Holy Spirit on Columba	Hinba
19	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Fergnae	Church
20	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Colgu	Church
21	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Berchan	Columba's house
21	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Berchan	Columba's house
21	Nonhealing	Precognition	Berchan	Columba's house
22	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Columba of his own death	Iona, his raised hut
22	Nonhealing	Precognition	Columba remains four more years	Iona
23	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Saint sees angel	Church
23	Nonhealing	Precognition	Foretells his death	Barn
23	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Draught horse mourns	Iona
23	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Diarmait sees angelic light	Church
23	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Seen by holy man, Lugaid	Ireland
23	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Seen by monk Ern�ne	River Finn, Co. Donegal
23	Nonhealing	Precognition	Columba on his funeral day	Iona
23	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint (posthumous)	Heavenly light around grave, etc.	Iona

Table 6.4. Miracle accounts in Book 2 of Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*.

Chapter	Healing or Nonhealing	Typology	Beneficiary
1	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	His nurse, broken tray
1	Nonhealing	Vision	Priest told by God to bring food
3	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Poisoned pitcher smashed
4	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Sees monk led out by little black boy
5	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Water flows from rock for monks
6	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Gets blade back from water for Goth
7	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Knows that Placid has fallen into water
7	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Maurus saves boy by walking over water
8	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Knows the loaf has been poisoned
8	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Raven is ordered to take loaf away

Table 6.4. Continued

Chapter	Healing or Nonhealing	Typology	Beneficiary
8	Nonhealing	Punishment	Jealous priest killed by God
9	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Devil removed from rock by prayer
10	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Prayer opens monk's eyes to devil's deception
11	Healing	Resurrection	Young monk whom wall fell on is killed
12	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Knows monks stopped for food
13	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Knows man had had food with stranger (devil)
14	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Knows the messenger was not king of Goths
15	Nonhealing	Precognition	Predicts death of Totila
15	Nonhealing	Precognition	On Rome's fall
16	Healing	Possession	Cleric
16	Nonhealing	Precognition	Warns cleric not to take holy orders; he later dies
17	Nonhealing	Precognition	Foretells barbarian attack on Monte Cassino
18	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Monk hides flask of wine for himself
19	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Knows about handkerchiefs given by nuns to monks
20	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Young monk becomes proud waiting on him
21	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Food supplied miraculously
22	Nonhealing	Vision	Appears to monks in a vision
23	Nonhealing	Punishment	Disobedient nuns punished after death
23	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Punishments stopped by prayer
24	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Young monk buried finally with Host blessed by him
25	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Prayers let monk see dragon that led him astray
26	Healing	Skin disease	Man with leprosy
27	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Debtor given gold pieces
27	Healing	Skin disease	Poison produces skin disease like leprosy
28	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Oil jar remains unbroken
29	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Oil filled miraculously during prayer
30	Healing	Possession	Devil possesses one of the older monks
31	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Farmer set free from cords
32	Healing	Resurrection	Son of farmer
33	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention (by Scolastica)	Wants to be with her brother and prays to God

(continued)

Table 6.4. Continued

Chapter	Healing or Nonhealing	Typology	Beneficiary
34	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Sees soul of Scolastica ascend to heaven in form of dove
35	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Sees flood of light
35	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Sees soul of Germanus going to heaven in ball of fire
37	Nonhealing	Precognition	His own death
37	Nonhealing	Vision	Monks see heavenly road taken by him after death
38	Healing	Mental illness (posthumous)	Woman who was in cave near Subiaco

Table 6.5. Miracle accounts in Muirchú's *Vita Patricii*.

Chapter	Healing or Nonhealing	Type	Beneficiary	Place
1.1	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Patrick	In slavery in Ireland
1.3	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge	Patrick	In captivity a second time
1.7	Nonhealing	Vision	Patrick	Auxerre
1.15	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Patrick, angel shows him lost pigs	Sliabh Miss
1.17	Nonhealing	Punishment	Lochru the Druid killed	Hill of Slane
1.18	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Patrick, high king's men fight among themselves	Hill of Slane
1.18	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Patrick's companions transformed into deer and escape	Hill of Slane
1.20	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Patrick, drop of poison in goblet frozen	Tara
1.20	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Patrick, removes snow summoned by Druid	Tara
1.20	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Patrick, removes darkness summoned by Druid	Tara
1.20	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Patrick, Druid killed in wooden house by fire while Patrick's servant is spared	Tara
1.29	Nonhealing	Punishment	Coroticus turned into a fox	Hall of Coroticus in Britain

Table 6.5. Continued

Chapter	Healing or Nonhealing	Type	Beneficiary	Place
1.27	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	British virgin Monesan dies after being blessed by Patrick to avoid unwanted marriage	Unspecified
1.28	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Patrick and Benignus see heavens open Patrick knows Benignus is his successor	Place of prayer in open
1.23	Nonhealing	Punishment	One of Macuill Maccugrecae's men pretends to be ill to trick Patrick as a test but does in fact die	Druim Mocceuchach in Ulster
1.24	Nonhealing	Punishment	Pagan men refuse to stop work on building a rampart on Sunday, and the following day their work is destroyed by a storm	Ox's Neck near the seashore
1.25	Nonhealing	Punishment	Daire killed as punishment for letting his horse graze on land he gave to Patrick	Near Armagh (Martyr's Graveyard)
1.25	Healing	Resurrection	Daire and his horse raised from the dead	Near Armagh (Martyr's Graveyard)
1.26	Nonhealing	Punishment	Field swamped by sea after Patrick curses it	Magh Inis
2.2	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Dead man speaks to Patrick from his tomb about how a cross was erected there	Tomb beside the road
2.3	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Rain does not fall where Patrick is staying	While traveling
2.3	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Patrick's finger lights up at night to find lost horses	While traveling with charioteer
2.4	Nonhealing	Vision	Angel reveals time of death	On the way to Armagh
2.5	Nonhealing	Vision	Angel tells him to return to Saul	On the way to Armagh
2.8	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint (posthumous)	Night suspended on day of Patrick's death	

(continued)

Table 6.5. Continued

Chapter	Healing or Nonhealing	Type	Beneficiary	Place
II.12	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint (posthumous)	Flames of fire seen from Patrick's tomb	Dun Lethglaisse
2.13	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention (posthumous)	Sea rises to stop tribes from fighting to claim Patrick's body	Inlet of Druimm Bo
2.14	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention (posthumous)	Illusion misleads tribes who want to steal Patrick's body, which disappears from their sight	Duth Lethglaisse to river Cabcenne

From the text published by Ludwig Bieler and online at http://www.confessio.ie/more/muirchu_english#. I follow the chapter headings of this online source.

Table 6.6. Miracle accounts in the *Vita Iohannis*.

Chapter	Healing or Nonhealing	Type	Beneficiary	Place
2	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	John, poisonous snake killed	Well on site of future monastery founded by John
7	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	John and community, thief returns axes of monks	Field near monastery
9	Nonhealing	Vision	Agrestius sees vision of Abbot John holding Eucharist	Agrestius's house at night beside his bed
10	Nonhealing	Punishment	Clarus, mouth and throat afflicted so he cannot eat after spitting on John's letter	Clarus's residence
11	Healing	Possession	Servant of civil official Nicasius	Monastery
12	Healing	Speech	Son of a certain man	Monastery
13	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Local people starved from famine, flour increased	Monastery
14	Nonhealing	Foreknowledge/vision	Segonus monk, John receives knowledge that the monk is praying in basilica and summons brothers to pray with him	Monastery

Table 6.6. Continued

Chapter	Healing or Nonhealing	Type	Beneficiary	Place
15	Healing	Fever	Man with quartan fever healed by Eucharist given by John	Sick man's home
16	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Monk Claudius sees globe of light at night shining over the world	Field of corn near monastery
17	Healing	Ulcers	Layman drinks water blessed from well in monastery by John	Man's home, having returned from Paris
20	Nonhealing	Vision/ glorification of saint (posthumous)	Old monk sees vision of first abbots John and Silvester and those with them dressed in white robes moving tomb to current position	Basilica of monastery/tomb

Table 6.7. Miracle accounts in the *Vita Vedastis*.

Chapter	Healing or Nonhealing	Type	Beneficiary	Place
3	Healing	Blindness	Layman	Vieux-Pont
4	Nonhealing	Favorable intervention	Vedast, wine provided for nobleman visitor	Rheims
5	Healing	Blindness	Blind man	Arras
5	Healing	Lameness	Cripple	Arras
6	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Bear ordered to leave city limits	Arras
7	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Hocinus and noble guests, beer vats exploded after being blessed	Royal court feast
8	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint	Vedast, column of fire descends from heaven to rest on his cell	Arras, bishop's cell
9	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint (posthumous)	Scupilio, bier of Vedast allowed to be moved	Arras cathedral
10	Nonhealing	Glorification of saint (posthumous)	Habita sees bed of Vedast on which he died is spared from fire	Arras, bishop's cell

Sanctity and Community

WHILE COLUMBANUS HAS BEEN CALLED “THE LAST LATE-ANTIQUE holy man”¹ in the tradition of the charismatic holy men of Late Antiquity, for Jonas, Columbanus’s principal legacy was as a monastic founder.² The community, not the individual holy man, lies at the heart of Jonas’s *VC*. Book 2 is central to understanding Jonas’s concept behind his work. His decision to focus on a number of communities after the saint’s death marks a fundamental shift in hagiographical writing in the west. Jonas’s *VC* helped create a new conceptualization of sanctity that was more focused on the monastic community than on the individual holy man.³ Following on from the thought-provoking work of Albrecht Diem on this subject, I want to look at some of the ways Jonas shifted attention from the holy man to the community and the monastic institution.

Up to the seventh century, the focus of hagiographers, whether they were bishops, monks, or ascetic individuals, had largely been on the individual holy men and women who had shaped the early Church and the monastic movement. Bishops such as Gregory of Tours and Theodoret of Cyrus or ascetic laymen such as Sulpicius Severus had largely dealt with individual holy men in their works, such as *The Life of the Fathers*, *A History of the Monks of Syria*, or the *Life of Martin*.⁴ The only comparable work in which the communities have a more prominent role is the anonymous sixth-century *Life of the Jura Fathers* (*VPJ*), about the founders of the Jura monasteries, Romanus, Lupicinus, and Eugendus.⁵ The *VPJ*, which also deals with three communities, may have provided Jonas with a model, although there is no textual evidence to show that he was aware of this work.⁶ Both the author of the *VPJ* and Jonas bring the monastic communities more to the foreground than was generally the case in

1. Diem 2007a, 557.

2. On the role of the holy man in Late Antiquity, see Brown 1971, reprinted in 1982, 101–152, with updated literature; Brown 2000. See also Howard-Johnston and Hayward 1999 on the influence of Brown’s model.

3. Diem 2007a.

4. For the changing aspects of hagiography, see Heinzelmann 1973.

5. For the edition and English translation of *The Life of the Jura Fathers*, see *VPJ*. The work was written for two ascetics, John and Armentarius, who were living at Agaune, the cult site of Saint Maurice and the Theban legion. As Ian Wood has noted, the unusual nature of the work stems from its attempt to illustrate the monastic practices of the Jura monasteries. See Wood 1981, 4.

6. See the comments of Stancliffe 2001, 200, concerning these “communal biographies.”

other works of hagiography. This subtle shift from the holy man to the monastic community has been highlighted by Diem:

Most monastic founders described in hagiographic works written after the *Vita Columbani* follow the model of Columbanus's successors instead of sharing the quality of a *vir Dei* in the tradition reaching from Antony to Columbanus. The difference between Columbanus and Eustasius—or between the first and the second book of the *Vita Columbani*—marks a watershed in the conceptual development of monastic sanctity. The *vir Dei* modelled after the early monastic fathers died a silent death with Columbanus.⁷

Indeed, Jonas's account of Columbanus's death which concludes Book 1 is probably the most unusual feature of the entire work. A number of scholars have commented on this. For Diem, it is proof that Jonas's main concern was with the communities established by the saint rather than with the saint himself.⁸ For Ian Wood, "Jonas's extraordinarily laconic entry on Columbanus's death" may have been intended to avoid attracting a lay cult to Bobbio.⁹ Not drawing attention to the miraculous powers of Columbanus's relics may have been expedient for a community that did not want lay intrusion and was sensitive about protecting the sacred space of the monastery.

RELICS IN THE COLUMBANIAN TRADITION

The issue of access and exclusion, which is a characteristic feature of the Columbanian monastic tradition, may also account for the conspicuous absence of relics in the VC.¹⁰ Although Columbanus visited the shrine of Saint Martin in Tours and the relics of Vedast and John briefly feature in the VV and the VJ, the veneration or use of relics within the Columbanian communities does not feature in the VC. Nor do relics feature in other Columbanian works of hagiography such as the later seventh-century *Vita Wandregiseli* or the *Vita Germani abbatis Grandivallensis*.¹¹ The case of Germanus, a Luxeuil monk who was martyred after founding the monastery of Grandval in modern Switzerland, is remarkable because little mention is made of his corporeal relics. Rather,

7. Diem 2007a, 553.

8. Diem 2007a, 545; 2008, 46.

9. Wood 1982, 67–68.

10. On Jonas's critical attitude toward relics, see Diem 2008, 44–48.

11. For Columbanus's visit to the shrine of Saint Martin in Tours, see VC 1.22: 201; for Jonas's account of the translation of Vedast and John, see VV 9: 317–318; VJ 19, 20: 342–344. Diem 2008, 46, distinguishes between monastic and clerical relics.

the author tells of Germanus's sword belt, which was hung up in the church of Grandval "beneath the relics of the saints" (*infra pignera sanctorum pendere*) and which, when immersed in water, had the power to heal a sick man.¹² Despite this interesting use of a secondary relic, there is no mention of any healings that took place at the tomb of the saint.

This lack of interest in relics is in marked contrast to the "art nouveau" world of Gregory of Tours, where relics played an important role in bolstering the status of bishops.¹³ This is not the case in Jonas or for the hagiographer of the *VPJ*, where the saints and their disciples heal the sick who flock to their monasteries. The cult of the saints represented by Jonas and the Jura author is a living charism very different from that in Gregory of Tours, where "death can mark only the beginning of long and acrimonious hagiographical manoeuvres."¹⁴ The Jura author, like Jonas, does not pay much attention to the relics of the dead founders of the Jura monasteries.¹⁵ This may simply reflect two perspectives, one episcopal, the other monastic, concerning the role of relics. For bishops such as Gregory, relics did not pose a threat to their authority, whereas charismatic holy men and their communities could. Gregory was not that interested in monastic affairs.

Whereas access to the healing power of the Jura communities was open to the people who flocked there, this was not the case in the Columbanian communities.¹⁶ As we find in Jonas's account of Theuderic's conflict with Columbanus in the refectory at Luxeuil, the pure space of the monastery had to be protected from lay pollution.¹⁷ This is further reiterated in the *VJ*, where Jonas tells the story of a man named Agrestius (the same name as that of the villain monk who appears in the *VC*) who came to the monastery of Réomé to attend Mass. At the consecration, Agrestius was asked to leave the church with the rest of the laity, but instead of waiting outside to receive the sacrament, he went home in a huff. The following night, John appeared to him in a vision and rebuked him for not taking the Eucharist.¹⁸ In this example, Jonas shows that

12. *Vita Germani abbatis Grandivallensis* 15: 39.

13. Brown 1982, 227. See also Van Dam 1993, 1985; Wood 1979. On the contrast between Gregory of Tours's view on relics and that of Jonas, see Diem 2008, 47–48.

14. Brown 1982, 245. On the Jura monasteries being accessible to the laity, see *VPJ* 15, 68, 147.

15. See *VPJ* 61 for the hagiographer's generic statement about the miracles worked by Romanus after his death that are comparable to Jonas's brief comment on Columbanus's relics in *VC* 1.30. See *VPJ* 42, however, for the account of a demoniac who was bound and suspended above the tomb of Saint Romanus.

16. As Diem 2008, 32, notes: "Generally, pre-Columbanian monastic hagiography, such as Gregory of Tours's works, the *Vita patrum Iurensium* and the works of Sulpicius Severus, do not give the impression of monasteries as separated or inaccessible spaces, at least not for people of the same sex." See Romanus in Gregory of Tours, *Liber vitae patrum* 1.6.

17. *VC* 1.19: 190.

18. *VJ* 9: 334–335.

issues relating to lay exclusion had precedent in the Gallic monasticism of John's time, while it also reflects Jonas's own interest in tightening the boundaries between monasteries and the outside world.¹⁹ In the *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines*, now ascribed by Diem as the work of Jonas and which I propose was written for the female community of Hamage, Jonas also addresses issues relating to lay access.²⁰ Such concerns were not confined to the Columbanian communities on the Continent but were also of importance for Adomnán, the abbot of Iona, when he came to write his *Life of Columba* at the end of the seventh century and later for the compilers of the Irish canon law collection, the *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*.²¹

The absence of relics in the early Columbanian communities appears to be one of the defining features of this monastic tradition. The relative unimportance of relics within the monastic community may have developed out of Columbanus's focus on active devotion centered on the collective community and in creating a "pure" space by means of control, access, and exclusion. This pure space was also achieved through rituals enacted by the community—confession, seeking a blessing on entering or leaving a building or while eating, and the performance of penance—that circumvented the power of relics as nodes of intercession with the divine. The community itself assumed this role, as we also find in the *VPJ*. This active devotion is most clearly seen in Columbanus's stipulation that each member of his community had to wear the consecrated host at all times and his prescription of a series of detailed penances that were to be performed if the host was lost or damaged.²² As Neil Xavier O'Donoghue has shown, the wearing of Eucharistic chrismals was a practice particular to early medieval Ireland and early medieval England.²³ The practice of wearing the Eucharist may have developed in the Insular world due to the difficulty of obtaining martyr relics.²⁴ A number of small house-shaped shrines, which O'Donoghue argues should now be interpreted as Eucharistic chrismals, have survived from Ireland and the Continent. These chrismals are more accurately sarcophagus-shaped, are very small, and have rings so that they could be suspended around the neck. The host

19. Diem 2008, 32. This concern with access to the monastic space also features in later hagiographic texts such as the *Vita Agili*, the *Vita Carileffi*, and the *Vita Anstrudis* as noted by Diem. See also Rosenwein 2002.

20. *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines* 3.23.

21. See, for example, Adomnán of Iona, *Life of St. Columba* 1.22, 1.32. For Iona as a holy island, see 2.28. On the regulation of space at Iona, see the excellent study by MacDonald 2001. Roy Flechner is preparing a new edition and study of the *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*.

22. *RCoen.* 4, 8, 15; *Paenitentiale* 6.

23. O'Donoghue 2011a, chap 2; 2011b.

24. O'Donoghue 2011b, 81–82. However, see Wycherley 2015 on the cult of relics in early medieval Ireland, who argues for cultic practices in relation to relics similar to those found on the Continent.

was accessed through the top of the chrismal, and some have glass or mica windows that could allow the host to be seen from the front.²⁵ One such chrismal survives in the Museo dell'Abbazia in Bobbio and has been dated to the seventh century.²⁶ This has been interpreted as a house-shaped reliquary, but recent research suggests that it should be interpreted as a Eucharistic chrismal.²⁷ The Bobbio chrismal was discovered in a sarcophagus in the crypt of Bobbio, and it presumably belonged to Columbanus or to one of his monks. It bears a striking resemblance to the seventh-century Clonmore shrine found in County Armagh, Northern Ireland, the earliest example of Irish Christian metalwork.²⁸ Cormac Bourke has highlighted the close similarities between the Bobbio and Clonmore shrines, noting that the “form and structure as well as details of locking, hinging and suspension are precisely comparable in the two reliquaries.” In his opinion, “There can be no doubt that the Bobbio shrine was made in Ireland and was taken to Italy either by the entourage of Columbanus or by some nearly contemporary traveller.”²⁹

These remarkable artifacts from Ireland and Bobbio provide a material witness to the Insular practice of wearing Eucharistic chrismals which Columbanus introduced into his continental communities. In the Columbanian context, the wearing of the Eucharist by each member could perhaps be seen as a means of control and of creating a holy community that transcended the utility of relics.³⁰ For Jonas, Columbanus's relics held little interest. Jonas notes that “His relics are preserved in this place, where they are powerful in working miracles under the aegis of Christ.”³¹ He does not go into any detail, however, about the posthumous miracles that occurred at the tomb, as one might expect. Perhaps this could be seen as an Irish feature, as Alan Thacker has noted that cults focusing on the grave of a saint are very rare in Ireland, or it may simply reflect a more widespread Mediterranean skepticism toward the cult of relics that was evident at this time, as Matthew Dal Santo has explored.³² Richard

25. O'Donoghue 2011b, 89.

26. Ryan 1990, 110, proposes an earlier seventh-century dating.

27. See Ryan 1990; Newman 2012 proposes that the Bobbio and Clonmore shrines should now be interpreted as Eucharistic chrismals.

28. Ryan 1990. On the Clonmore shrine, see Bourke 1994, 1995.

29. Bourke 1995, 28.

30. Diem 2007a, 558, notes, however, that this changed within two generations of Columbanus's death, with the monastic policy of Queen Balthild, when relics began to play a bigger role in Columbanian monasticism.

31. *Reliquiaeque eius eo habentur in loco conditae, ubi et virtutum decore pollent presole Christo*. VC 1.30: 224 (O'Hara and Wood 2017, 169–170). Diem 2008, 48, adds that “Jonas emphasises his attitude toward relics by consistently not mentioning them.”

32. Thacker 1989; Dal Santo 2012.

Sharpe also commented on the fact that the tradition of compiling accounts of posthumous miracles was never adopted in Ireland, either.³³ At this time, Columbanus's grave may have been located not in the church but, following Irish custom, in the monastic graveyard.³⁴ What was more important to Jonas was Columbanus's legacy as a monastic teacher and founder. Jonas directs the reader's attention to Columbanus's writings before he mentions his relics. And in the poem that ends Book 1, Jonas lauds Columbanus as the father to cohorts of monks (*monachorum cohortes te clarum dicent patrem*).³⁵ This institutional aspect of Jonas's portrayal of Columbanus is a feature that runs throughout Book 1. Jonas's primary objective was to show Columbanus as a great monastic founder and to stress the obedience that was still due to this holy man and to his teachings.

FOUNDATION NARRATIVES

The institutional focus of Jonas is further seen in his descriptions of the sites chosen by Columbanus for his monastic foundations. In these accounts, Jonas's sense of place and his eye for topography (features common to all of his writings) are apparent.³⁶ This attention to topographical detail is also characteristic of Jonas's accounts of the sites chosen by Columbanus for his monastic foundations. Jonas describes the site of Luxeuil in these terms:

He found a settlement that had once been well fortified about eight miles away from Annegray and which was known as *Luxovium* since ancient times. There were hot baths that had been built with great skill and many stone images that littered the nearby wood, which in the ancient times of the pagans were honoured by the wretched worship and profane rites of the pagans, and to which they made offerings in detestable ceremonies. Only a multitude of wild animals and beasts, bears, buffaloes, and wolves

33. Sharpe 1991, 34.

34. See Richter 2008, 28. This was similarly the case with John of Réomé, as reported by Jonas; see *VJ* 19: 342. John's remains were later translated into the abbatial church.

35. *VC, Versus ad mensam canendi*: 224.

36. His description of the Frankish courtier Eligius's foundation of Solignac near Limoges is typical: *iuxta Lemovicensem urbem monasterium nobile Sollemniacum nomine construxit super fluvium Vincennam, distantem a supradicta urbe milibus quattuor* (*VC* 2.10: 255). There is similar attention to topographical detail in the *VV*. In describing Clovis's meeting with Vedast on the way to Toul and their traveling together, Jonas notes the place where Vedast worked his first miracle: *quadam diae venerunt in pago Vunginse ad locum qui dicitur Grandeponte, iuxta villa Riguliaco, super fluvium Axona* (*VV* 3: 311). Similarly, in the *VJ*, Jonas gives a precise location of the place where John was born: *Ortus venerandi cultus Iohannes infra terminos Ternoderensis castri, qui locus in suburbano Lingonice urbis situs est, villa que vocatur Quartaniacum super fluvium Bridenam* (*VJ* 1: 328–329).

haunted that place. The venerable man settled there and started to build a monastery.³⁷

This is an evocative description of how an ancient pagan place, the haunt of savage beasts, was civilized and changed by the arrival of a holy man.³⁸ Luxeuil is still well known for its hot and cold springs, and in antiquity there was a cult to the springs attested by hundreds of wooden votive anthropomorphic offerings that have been discovered there. There are also many Roman memorial stones, including one dedicated to the god Apollo, which can still be seen in the local civic museum.³⁹ Luxeuil was a sizable regional town, next in size to Besançon (Vesontio). It appears to have been in continuous use up to Columbanus's arrival in the last decade of the sixth century, as the recent excavations of Sébastien Bully have shown.⁴⁰

Jonas emphasizes Luxeuil's liminality and pagan past in order to enhance the heroic stature of Columbanus. This should not surprise us, as it was a well-established literary trope for hagiographers to portray their subjects as pioneers taming the dark wilderness, even if this was not always the case.⁴¹ Even the image of the desert in the work of the earliest hagiographers on the Egyptian monks was largely a created landscape, as James E. Goehring has discussed.⁴² The image that Jonas sought to convey was of a spiritual wilderness that served as a suitable ascetic arena detached from the urban environment. In this, he was constructing a literary metaphor that stretched back to Athanasius's *Vita Antonii*. As James Palmer has also noted, "The creation of saints and the transformation of the landscape went hand in hand."⁴³

The saint's command over the natural world was also a sure sign of his ascetic credentials and his ability to transform the wilderness into a *locus sanctus*.⁴⁴ The

37. *invenitque castrum firmissimo olim fuisse munimine cultum, a supradicto loco distantem plus minus octo milibus, quem Luxovium prisca tempora nuncupabant. Ibi aquae calidae cultu eximio constructae habebantur; ibi imaginum lapidearum densitas vicina saltus densabant, quas cultu miserabili ritoque profano vetusta paganorum tempora honorabant, quibusque execrabiles ceremonias litabant; solae ibi ferae ac bestiae, ursorum, bubalorum, luporum multitudo frequentabant. Ibi residens vir egregius, monasterium construere coepit.* VC 1.10: 169 (O'Hara and Wood 2017, 115–116). See Jonas's description of Annegray, VC 1.6: 163. See O'Hara 2015 on Columbanus's monastic foundations.

38. On monastic foundation narratives, see Kastner 1974; von der Nahmer 1973; Sennis 2006.

39. Jonas's mention of Luxeuil is the first appearance of the name in the historical record, although two Roman dedications to a god Luxovius or Lussoius, from which the town probably derives its name, are known. On Luxeuil in antiquity, see Stillwell, MacDonald, and McAlister 1976, s.v. Luxovium.

40. Bully 2009, 2010.

41. This was also the case for Saint Boniface's foundation at Fulda, for which see Palmer 2009, 149, and chap. 4 generally on foundation legends.

42. Goehring 1993, 2003. See also Guillaumont 1975 on the conceptions of the desert in early Christian monasticism.

43. Palmer 2009, 153.

44. See Brown 1980, 23–49.

holiness of the man of God restored the original relationship of man to beast, as in paradise (see Genesis 1: 26–30; Isaiah 11: 6–9). There are many examples of Columbanus's command over animals in the VC that serve Jonas's purpose of crafting an image of the saint in the mold of the desert fathers. Columbanus remains untouched after having been set on by a pack of wolves, he expels a bear from its den, he commands a bear to leave the carcass of a stag, birds are miraculously provided for him and his community during a time of hunger in Bregenz, and he commands a bear to eat only from a certain part of an orchard.⁴⁵ The fullest account of Columbanus's rapport with animals was given to Jonas by Bishop Chagnoald of Laon, the brother of Burgundofara, who had been Columbanus's assistant in Alamannia. It is probably the most charming image that Jonas gives of Columbanus and is worth quoting in full:

[Chagnoald] told me that he often saw Columbanus, when he was taking a walk in the wilderness and was devoting himself to fasting and prayer, how he would frequently summon wild animals, beasts, and birds which would come immediately at his command, and he would pet them gently. The savage animals and birds, rejoicing and playing with great delight, would then jump about, just as puppies fawn upon their masters. And the aforementioned man [Chagnoald] said he had often seen the little animal, which people commonly name a squirrel, called down from the tops of high trees, taken in his hand and put on his neck where he let it crawl in and out of his habit.⁴⁶

Such stories were demonstrations of Columbanus's saintliness, but, as already discussed, they were also intended as allegorical tales of obedience. Dumb animals showed obedience to Columbanus; hence, so should his monastic communities. It is interesting that these animal miracle stories are largely absent from Book 2, which suggests that they served a particular purpose for Jonas in Book 1. The only instance in Book 2 involves a Bobbio monk, Leubardus, who commanded a fox not to eat grapes from the vineyard; the fox died when it disobeyed the monk.⁴⁷ There is nothing particularly Irish about these animal

45. See VC 1.8; 1.17; 1.27.

46. *qui se testabatur sepe vidisse, cum in heremo vel ieiunio vel oratione vacans deambulet, esse sepe solitum feras, bestias ac aves arcessire, quae ad imperium eius statim veniebant, quas manu blandiens adtrecebat: ita fere avesque gaudentes ac ludentes laetitia uberi, velut catuli solent dominis adolare, exultabant. Et ferusculam, quam vulgo homines exquirium vocant, sepe de arduis arborum culminibus arcessitum manumque receptum suoque collo inpositum sinuque ingredientem ac exeuntem sepe vidisse supradictus vir testabatur.* VC 1.17: 185–186 (1.15 in O'Hara and Wood 2017, 127).

47. VC 2.25.

miracle stories, as they were also prevalent in the earliest monastic hagiography with which Jonas was well acquainted.⁴⁸

The literary motif of the saint transforming the wilderness into a *locus sanctus* and his command over evil was often expressed by the saint expelling wild or venomous creatures such as bears or snakes. We see this in Jonas's evocative description of Luxeuil before Columbanus established his monastery or when Columbanus expels the bear from the cave that became his hermitage near Annegray. There are similar episodes in the VV where Vedast expels a bear from the deserted city of Arras, whose inhabitants had reverted to paganism and which had been infested by snakes and wild beasts.⁴⁹ Also in the VJ, the saint kills a snake on the site of the future monastery of Réomé.⁵⁰ Such features were staple motifs of monastic hagiography.

Whereas Jonas chose to emphasize Luxeuil's barbaric pagan past in his description of the site, his account of Bobbio is quite different. His description of Bobbio is the best example of the way the author evoked a sense of place that became sacred upon the establishment of a monastic community. But Bobbio was different from all of Columbanus's other foundations, because it was a place already sanctified by miracles. Jonas gives an idyllic account of Bobbio,⁵¹ a place Columbanus had been led to by divine assistance.⁵² Jonas tells us that King Agilulf gave Columbanus the choice of settling wherever he wished within Italy. This recalls the same offer from King Sigibert to Columbanus to found his first monastery in Annegray.⁵³ In reality, Columbanus probably had less freedom than Jonas cares to admit, but Jonas is at pains in both instances here to minimize the role of the kings in the foundation process. The foundation charter for Bobbio makes it clear that Columbanus had to share the adjacent territory with a prominent Lombard warlord. Columbanus comes to choose Bobbio through

48. Picard 1981, 98–99, notes that while animal miracle stories appear in both continental and Irish hagiography, they are a marked feature of Irish saints' lives, where they tend to be more fantastical; see also Stancliffe 1992, 90–91, on the common Christian tradition, which Irish hagiographers were aware of and which they drew from in their own works.

49. *Quam cernens incultam ac neglegentiam civium paganorum praetermissam, veprium densitatem oppletam, stercorem ac bestiarum habitaculum pollutam.* VV 6: 314.

50. VJ 2: 330.

51. Bobbio's fertility and goodness—*loca ubertate fecunda, aquis inrigua, piscium copia*—recalls Eden. VC 1.30: 221.

52. An angel had shown Columbanus the way to Italy, and his foundation of Bobbio was brought about *Dei consultu*. VC 1.27: 217; 1.30: 220–221. On the site of a monastery presanctified by miracles, see the angels mentioned in the Irish work of hagiography, the *Vita S. Fintani de Cluain Edhnech* 3. Angels are also associated with the importance of the "place of resurrection," as in *Vita S. Albei* 34, and this is natural if angels are believed to conduct the souls of the just to heaven (*Life of Columba* book 3; the Faremoutiers chapters of the VC). I am grateful to Thomas Charles-Edwards for this information.

53. VC 1.6.

Jocundus (probably a royal agent), who tells the king about a ruined basilica “in the solitude of the Apennine countryside. He knew by experience that miracles took place there. It was a bountiful fertile place, with refreshing waters, and an abundance of fish. Ancient tradition called it Bobbio on account of the stream with this name that flows in this place and which joins another river called the Trebbia, on the banks of which Hannibal once, while passing the winter there, suffered the severe loss of men, horses, and elephants.”⁵⁴ Here Jonas connects the site to the ancient past (in this case Hannibal), but in contrast to Luxeuil, this was a place of abundance (*copia*) where miracles occurred.⁵⁵ The reconstruction of the ruined basilica at Bobbio was accompanied by miracles. All of this is in contrast to Jonas’s other accounts of Columbanus’s monasteries, where no miracles take place in relation to their founding and which emphasize the preeminence (in Jonas’s mind, at least) of Bobbio. Wood also discussed the contrast between these different foundation narratives and noted: “There can be no doubt that Bobbio is intended to come off best from these comparisons, for it also had a Christian past: the site could already boast a church of Saint Peter, which was only *semiruta*: there *virtutes* happened.”⁵⁶ Bobbio, not Luxeuil, was preeminent among Columbanus’s foundations, the one that most faithfully preserved Columbanus’s teachings.⁵⁷ More than half of Book 2 concerns Bobbio, while it is clear that for Jonas, Athala was Columbanus’s true successor. He is the only one in Book 2 who is called *vir Dei*, while also being the one who performs a significant number of miracles, many similar to those worked by Columbanus.⁵⁸ Also, a number of Bobbio monks work miracles that take place at Bobbio. This is not the case at Luxeuil, where Jonas does not mention any miracles taking place in Book 2. Eustasius is the only Luxeuil figure who performs miracles, but all of these take place away from the monastery. Jonas evokes Bobbio in idyllic terms, and he likens Columbanus’s exiled community on its way to Bobbio to the Israelites on their journey to the Promised Land. This comparison might have been meant to evoke the elite nature of Columbanus’s community at Bobbio.⁵⁹

54. *qui regi indicat se in solitudine ruribus Appenninis basilicam beati Petri apostolorum principis scire, in quam virtutes expertus sit fieri, loca ubertate fecunda, aquis inrigua, piscium copia. Quem locum veterum tradition Bobium nuncupabant ob rivum in eo loco hoc nomine flunetem amnemque alium profluentem nomine Triveam; super quem olim Hannibal hiemans, hominum, aequorum, elefantorum atrocissime damna sensit.* VC 1.30: 221 (O’Hara and Wood 2017, 167). The choice of the site at the confluence of two rivers recalls that of Condadisco, the site chosen by Romanus for his first monastery in the Jura. See VPJ 6: 103.

55. Jonas’s historical awareness is also evident in VV 6: 314, where he notes that Attila the Hun had destroyed the city of Arras.

56. Wood 1998, 105.

57. I disagree here with Diem, who argues for Luxeuil’s preeminence: Diem 2007a, 551–552.

58. See Diem 2007a, 550.

59. VC 1.23: 206; 1.27: 215.

Toward the end of the seventh century, Bobbio was still seen as a model community from the distant perspective of Fontanella (St. Wandrille) in northern France. The author of the *Vita Wandregiseli* tells of how the aristocratic founder of Fontanella was transported by an angel to Bobbio, where he was shown the monastery and its buildings (*ostendens ei omnis habitacionis eius, quomodo aut qualiter adessent*). When he later set out to travel to Bobbio, “in the region of the Lombards which is called Italy” (*in regione Langobardorum qui dicitur Italia*), he was shown the way by an angel in much the same way Columbanus was led to Italy by an angel.⁶⁰ What is interesting about this account is that Wandregisel is not brought to an exemplary holy man but rather to an exemplary community. It shows the extent to which concepts of sanctity had changed during the course of the seventh century.

The Jura author and Jonas both give evocative descriptions of the landscapes in which their monasteries were founded.⁶¹ The Jura author, however, was more explicit in situating this landscape within the same landscape tradition of the desert fathers. When Romanus came to settle at the site that would become the monastery of Condadisco, he found a fir tree which gave him shelter. As in Jerome’s *Vita Pauli*, where a palm tree provided shelter for the hermit Paul, “so this tree now covered Paul’s disciple.”⁶² The connection between Paul and Romanus is made explicit by the author. This landscape had its roots in the tradition of the earliest monastic hagiography, as is also evident from the Lérinian circle: Eucherius of Lyons’s *In Praise of the Desert* and Hilary of Arles’s *Sermon on Honoratus* were both strongly influenced by this tradition. The author of the *Jura Fathers* was also associated with this circle, as he had been requested to write the work by Marinus, abbot of Lérins.⁶³ While Jonas was familiar with the desert literature, he does not attempt to make explicit comparisons. Certainly, he saw Columbanus in the same line as Antony, Paul, and the other desert holy men, but he never explicitly states this. There is a more realist element in Jonas’s descriptions of landscape. He did not feel the need to imbue the landscape the same way the Lérinian writers did.

The ways in which the Lérinian authors defined their own distinctive sacred topography is brought out well in Hilary of Arles’s *Sermon on Honoratus* about the founder of Lérins, written around 430 in response to Eucherius of Lyons’s earlier work, *In Praise of the Desert*, from around 427. In his sermon,

60. *Vita Wandregiseli* 9: 17. See VC 1.27: 217.

61. This attention to the landscape is also prevalent in the autobiographical writings of the Spanish hermit Valerius of Bierzo, writing toward the end of the seventh century, in the beautiful descriptions he gives of the sites of his hermitages. See O’Hara 2013.

62. *VPJ* 7: 103.

63. *VPJ* 179: 184.

Hilary stressed the transformative power of the holy man over that of the holy place (Lérins).⁶⁴ Hilary, like Eucherius before him, is explicit in drawing out the parallels between the early monastic community in Lérins and the Israelites of Exodus in the Old Testament. Honoratus transformed the wilderness of the island of Lérins; he drove the snakes away and “pitched there, as it were, the camp of God, and the place which had long driven men away from lingering there became renowned for angelic observance. The hiding place was illumined, while its light was being hidden. The darkness of this formerly unknown wilderness yielded to the brightness of this voluntary exile.”⁶⁵

This construction of represented space derived from the Old Testament model, and the explicit association of the Lérinian community with that of the Israelites in the desert is also brought out strongly in Eucherius of Lyons’s earlier work, *In Praise of the Desert*, which was addressed to Hilary. Hilary would later write of the early community that settled on the island, “they rejoiced in rest after a long and heavy slavery under the Pharaohs,”⁶⁶ so Eucherius employed similar language for the Lérinian community: “You are now the true Israel who gazes upon God in his heart, who has just been freed from the dark Egypt of this world, who has crossed the saving waters in which the enemy drowned, who follows the burning light of faith in the desert.”⁶⁷

The biblical self-representation modeled on the Israelites of Exodus was obviously important for the Lérinian communal identity and was part of its discourse in shaping a cultural image. But, as Leyser has argued, this self-congratulatory panegyric was primarily employed to further the ambitions of a careerist group of aristocratic ascetics who aimed at episcopal advancement: “When they spoke of ‘Lerins’ the panegyrists appealed to the memory of a shared allegiance, in full knowledge that it would not prevent them from deserting one another.”⁶⁸ The panegyrics, which Leyser sees as political texts, were intended not to pass on information about the island but instead to reveal a division within the Lérinian community itself about its role in assuming episcopal office in southern Gaul.⁶⁹

As Antonio Sennis discussed in his article on memory and space in medieval monasteries, space was a cultural image that played a central element in a system of representation.⁷⁰ Texts were media of interpreting the landscape and, as such, were part of a discursive strategy that redefined the notion of space. For

64. Leyser 1999, 197. On Lérins and the Lérinian authors discussed here, see Brown 2012, 419–425.

65. Hilary of Arles, *Sermon on Honoratus* 16: 374.

66. Hilary of Arles, *Sermon on Honoratus* 17: 375.

67. Eucherius of Lyons, *In Praise of the Desert* 44: 215.

68. Leyser 1999, 189.

69. Leyser 1999, 192.

70. Sennis 2006, 287.

fourth-century Christians, the need to identify with the early martyrs and their places of burial led to the development of a Christian sacralization of space.⁷¹ But it was through the prescriptive texts of the nascent monastic movement that this idea of sacred topography was most fully articulated and defined.⁷² In the Lérinian panegyrics, Hilary subtly refuted Eucherius's attempt to make Lérins into a holy island; it was not the place that was sacred in itself but the work of Honoratus the holy man that transformed this wilderness. Both authors did this, however, through biblical language imbued with the imagery of the desert.

Jonas is less explicit than the Lérinian authors in articulating a self-representation grounded on the Old Testament model of the Israelites in the desert. However, he does make some parallels between Columbanus and Moses. When Columbanus's personal assistant Domoalis complained about the difficulty of getting water, Columbanus prayed, and water issued from the rock at his hermitage near Annegray. Columbanus said to him, "My son, examine the rockface for a little while, being mindful that the Lord caused water to pour from rock for the people of Israel."⁷³ The connection between Moses and Columbanus is made more explicit in Jonas's account of the exiled community in Alamannia. Jonas notes that when Columbanus and his companions were in Bregenz, they suffered from a severe shortage of food. After three days of fasting, they found a large flock of birds all around the surrounding countryside, "just as once quails had covered the camp of the Israelites." Columbanus understood that this was provided for them, and the miracle was confirmed when the birds did not try to fly away as the monks went to catch them. The "manna of birds" remained for three days, until a local bishop sent a supply of grain to the monks.⁷⁴ This allusion to the Israelites of Exodus, which was also a prominent image for the Lérinian writers, is placed before an angel appears to Columbanus to tell him not to continue east to the Wendish Slavs but to go to Italy. Columbanus is akin to Moses leading his chosen people (the break-off community from Luxeuil) to the place God has chosen for him in Italy (the angel even guides him over the mountains). The modeling of the exiled community in Alamannia on the Israelites served as a prelude to Jonas's account of the foundation of Bobbio and as a means to underline the distinction between the Luxeuil and Bobbio communities. The use of such biblical imagery was a strategy of distinction, as it had been for the earlier Lérinian writers.

71. Markus 1994.

72. Sennis 2006, 288–289.

73. VC 1.9 (O'Hara and Wood 2017, 115).

74. VC 1.27 (O'Hara and Wood 2017, 161).

This attention to the sites and the foundation narratives of the Columbanian communities reveal the image of Columbanus that Jonas was most eager to project. What was of more importance to Jonas than the charismatic persona of the saint were the standing and power of the communities Columbanus established. This is evident in the attention Jonas gives to the independent standing and privileges given to these communities and his attempt to minimize the extent of royal involvement in the foundation of Columbanus's monasteries.⁷⁵ Jonas details at length the mission of Abbot Bertulf to obtain the first-ever papal privilege of exemption for Bobbio from Pope Honorius I, while at the end of Book 1, Jonas notes the assistance given to Luxeuil by Chlothar II who is presented as the most important secular benefactor of the community.⁷⁶ Columbanus refused to return to Luxeuil after Chlothar II sent Eustasius to Bobbio to ask the holy man to return. The only thing Columbanus asked the king was "to favour with his support and protection his companions who were living in Luxeuil." Jonas also notes that Columbanus wrote a letter to the king (which has not survived) and that the king promised to give the monastery his protection and support.⁷⁷ No charter of Chlothar II survives for Luxeuil, and one wonders whether Jonas's assertion of Chlothar's support should not be seen as a gentle reminder to his grandson and the current Merovingian regime to continue their support for Luxeuil. Luxeuil may have had concerns at this time during the minority of Clovis II (who was raised to the throne in 639 at the age of two) that its rights and property would be respected. Wood has noted that Luxeuil may have received a papal privilege around the time Jonas was writing in the early 640s and that Bobbio's privilege of 628 likely inspired Luxeuil to seek its own papal charter.⁷⁸

But Jonas was also concerned that these communities should continue to honor the founding father and to maintain Columbanian monastic practices. From Columbanus's death at Bobbio, which closes Book 1, Jonas continues in Book 2 to deal with Columbanus's successors as abbots of Bobbio and Luxeuil and also with the female religious community of Faremoutiers. Book 2 allowed Jonas to show how Columbanus's successors and communities lived up to or disobeyed the saint's *regula*. This *gesta abbatum*-style narrative following the death of Columbanus was unusual, for, as Diem notes, "Most hagiographic works stress at this point the continuous presence of the saint in his relics and give accounts of postmortem miracles. . . . Instead, the second book focuses on

75. See Wood 1998.

76. VC 2.23: 283; 1.30: 223.

77. VC 1.30.

78. Wood 1998, 118–119; on the Luxeuil papal privilege, see also Ewig 1974.

the deeds of Columbanus's successors and heirs and shows how his *regula* (or: his transformed charisma) was preserved and defended despite the fact that he had left the stage."⁷⁹ But Book 2 was also concerned with dissent and the attempts to undermine Columbanus's *regula* by those in the Frankish communities, and, as such, Jonas wanted to show the punishments that were inflicted on those who sought to undermine Columbanus's monastic practices.

DEATH AND THE AFTERLIFE IN JONAS

The shift from the charismatic holy man in Book 1 to the monastic communities in Book 2 can also be seen in Jonas's treatment of death and the afterlife. Apart from Columbanus's "spectacularly unspectacular death"⁸⁰ and Jonas's mention of the death of one of the Irish monks, also named Columbanus, Book 1 is devoid of the kind of miraculous otherworldly scenarios that are characteristic of the second part of the work. This is because Jonas used accounts of death and the afterlife in Book 2 as exempla that demonstrated to the Columbanian communities the necessity of living a strict monastic observance within an institution. It was also closely linked to his treatment of internal dissension in Book 2. His lengthy account of Agrestius's rebellion includes descriptions of some spectacular deaths that befell the male and female community at Remiremont, which had sided with Agrestius. Rabid wolves broke into the enclosure of Remiremont and tore to pieces two men "who were supporters of this faction." Another, Plaireius, was possessed by demons and hanged himself. When these divine punishments failed to correct the community, a lightning bolt struck the church and wiped out many. Jonas notes somewhat nonchalantly: "Up to this point twenty nuns had died; then death seizes one by one those who had been struck down with fear, so that in the course of this punishment it was reckoned that more than fifty died."⁸¹ As for Agrestius himself, he was ignominiously hacked down by his slave with an ax after he became involved with the man's wife, or so rumor had it.⁸² Jonas's accounts of these dramatic deaths were meant as exempla to show the consequences of disobedience. "This just sentence of the divine judge did not delay to strike [Agrestius] down, in order that it might teach his followers to flee from attacking the servants of God, and that He would repay acts of stubbornness with appropriate punishment."⁸³ Jonas

79. Diem 2007a, 549.

80. Diem 2007a, 548–549.

81. VC 2.10 (O'Hara and Wood 2017, 201).

82. VC 2.10.

83. VC 2.10 (O'Hara and Wood 2017, 201).

continued this theme in the Faremoutiers section, chapters 11–22 of Book 2, where the good and bad deaths and the miraculous and demonic visions experienced by members of the Faremoutiers community served as case studies. He notes at the beginning of chapter 11 that he will relate “how many and how great miracles the Author of All Things deigned to show there for the encouragement of his female servants.”⁸⁴

The Faremoutiers section has often been dismissed by modern historians as being somehow out of place within the context of the work, and some have even argued that it was only intended for the Faremoutiers community and was not disseminated with the rest of the work.⁸⁵ This is missing the central importance of the Faremoutiers chapters and what Jonas was trying to do by including them. The abbess of the community, Burgundofara, and her brother, Burgundofaro, bishop of Meaux, who were members of the important aristocratic Faronid family, were clearly part of the intended audience for the work. Jonas had direct contact with the community, where he had spent some time and had celebrated the anniversary Mass of one of the deceased nuns, Gibitrudis.⁸⁶ As we have seen, Jonas was also an abbot of the double community of Marchiennes-Hamage, so the Faremoutiers chapters would have had a particular relevance for his own community.

Jonas’s treatment of death and the afterlife prefigures much of the later visionary literature that would be written in Merovingian Gaul during the seventh century and can be seen as reflecting the influence of the penitentials.⁸⁷ The examples of the Faremoutiers nuns served to show the importance of obedience,⁸⁸ the importance of confession,⁸⁹ the pitfalls of religious pride,⁹⁰ and the importance of mortification,⁹¹ as well as warning about the dangers of dissension.⁹² The case of Sisetrudis, who was taken to heaven but ordered by God to return because she had not completed her full term of preparation, was used to stress the importance of mortification. Jonas notes that “This was the first encouragement of this monastery which the Lord wished to show to His female servants so that the others, who were still alive, might aspire to religious worship with all their might.”⁹³ The case of Gibitrudis, who was also taken to

84. VC 2.11 (O’Hara and Wood 2017, 204).

85. Tosi 1965, xxvi–xxvii; Berschin 1988a, 38; Rohr 1995, 242–244. See also O’Hara and Wood 2017, 37–41.

86. VC 2.12: 261–262.

87. On this visionary literature and Jonas’s place in it, see Moreira 2000, 151–152.

88. VC 2.18.

89. VC 2.1; 2.10.

90. VC 2.16.

91. VC 2.22.

92. VC 2.11; 2.19.

93. VC 2.11 (O’Hara and Wood 2017, 205–206).

heaven but ordered to return because she still harbored ill feelings toward three nuns, illustrated the dangers of dissension and the importance of confession within the community. The case of Domma illustrated the pitfalls of religious pride and the necessity of penance. After she took Communion, a ball of light was seen shining in her mouth by two young oblates. Domma became proud and started to “love the excitements of arrogance and pride, and to fall into the sin of obstinacy, and to prefer the haughtiness of pride, so that she scorned the mother, looked down on her companions, and shunned the warnings of all.”⁹⁴ She was immediately struck down with fever and brought to the point of death but would still not confess. However, the two young girls who had seen the light shining from her mouth also fell ill but merited a blessed death. One of the girls began to sing a song unheard of by human ears, and a sweet smell filled the room in which they lay. Jonas concludes that Domma would have merited a similar death if she had not succumbed to arrogance and pride.⁹⁵

In the case of the dying nun Willesuinda, who miraculously recited whole books from scripture, Jonas used the account of her death to illustrate the fate of external enemies who violated the boundaries of the monastery. Willesuinda prophesied that the Neustrian mayor of the palace, Aega, who was regent for the infant king Clovis II, would die. Aega “set himself against the monastery, violated its boundaries, and whenever he found the occasion he persecuted its dependents who were living in the area.”⁹⁶ Aega’s hostility toward Faremoutiers probably stemmed from an ongoing feud with Burgundofara’s family, the Faronids. According to Fredegar, Aega’s son-in-law, Ermenfred, killed Count Chainulf, who might be associated with Chagnulf, Chagneric’s son and Burgundofara’s brother.⁹⁷ Fredegar notes that some days after the murder of Chainulf, Aega succumbed to fever and died. This occurred in 642, around the same time that Jonas was writing. As was the case in the later *Visio Baronti* from the end of the 670s where the monk Barontus sees two local bishops suffering in hell who had been enemies of his monastery, such accounts served as vehicles “for an invective against any outside forces which threatened the monastery.”⁹⁸ As Michelle Roper has discussed for the *Visio Baronti*, internal conflict within the monastery of Saint Peter Longoretus may have been the cause of the text’s heavy accent on fellowship and the strong emphasis placed on community.⁹⁹

94. VC 2.16 (O’Hara and Wood 2017, 214).

95. VC 2.16.

96. VC 2.17: 269.

97. Fredegar 4.83. See also 4.80 for a mostly positive impression of Aega, although Fredegar notes that he had a tendency to be avaricious.

98. See Roper 1999: 26.

99. Roper 1999, 27.

This may also be the case for Jonas's earlier accounts, where themes such as worldliness, discipline, arrogance and pride, and failing to make confession were issues that Jonas wanted to address through these deathbed accounts. Jonas may also have felt that he could more easily address these issues through the example of a female community.

These stories served as individual case studies that illustrated key concerns that Jonas wanted to address and were meant to foster inner cohesion and discipline within the communities he was writing for. As he made clear, "If we include those things which help in the progress and advancement of the perfect or even for the correction of sinners, by no means let anyone judge that we have compiled unnecessary things. For there is no doubt that the losses experienced by others render many more vigilant by prompting them towards the rewards to be gained."¹⁰⁰ There is also a close overlap between the concerns dealt with in the Faremoutiers chapters and the proscriptions that Jonas sets out in his *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines*. Diem has demonstrated a close correlation also in terms of language between both works.¹⁰¹ The necessity to confess three times a day appears in chapter 19 and in chapter 6 of the *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines*, the regulation of eating habits is addressed in chapter 22 and in chapters 10 and 11 of the *Regula*, the problem of nuns who attempted to run away is addressed in chapter 19 and in chapter 21 of the *Regula*, and there are further examples that show the close correspondence between Jonas's concerns in the Faremoutiers chapters and in his *Regula*.¹⁰²

By giving accounts of the miraculous and malevolent deaths of past members of the Columbanian communities, Jonas emphasized the importance of obedience to the authority of the abbot or abbess and to the monastic observances. Unlike Gregory the Great in Book 4 of the *Dialogues*, who was more concerned to give an eschatological perspective through his accounts of death and the afterlife, Jonas was not interested in eschatological or theological revelations about heaven and hell. His concerns were with the community in the here and now and fostering correct monastic observance. These accounts were thus not primarily eschatological, but institutional.¹⁰³ They were written to reaffirm Columbanian

100. *Si ea quae ad profectum vel augmentum perfectorum vel etiam ad emendationem delinquentium inserimus, nequaquam nos non necessarias res quispiam iudicet compilare; nulli quipped dubium est, quod aliorum damna plerosque movendo ad capienda lucre vigilantiores reddant.* VC 2.16: 266 (O'Hara and Wood 2017, 213).

101. *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines*.

102. See, for example, how family members were to treat one another in VC 2.15 and *Regula cuiusdam* 23; also VC 2.13 and 2.16 and *Regula* 24 for child oblates.

103. On this institutional use of death and otherworldly accounts, see O'Hara 2009a; Roper 1999.

monastic practices by clearly contrasting the fates of past members of the communities.

THE SUPERNATURAL IN JONAS

Another feature in which we can discern shifting concepts of sanctity away from the individual holy man to that of the holy community is the changing role of the supernatural in hagiography. In Jonas's writings, angels and demons are bit players, exotic background scenery to the otherwise mundane monastic routine. In earlier Late Antique hagiography, however, these supernatural beings are much more prominent and are important actors in the drama of the saint's ascetic struggles. Demons play an important role in the *Vita Antonii*, where they are active protagonists against Antony's attempts to live the monastic life in the desert. This is not the case in Jonas, where demons serve as passive foils for the saint and the community. What is the significance of this change in the representation of the supernatural?

Diem has remarked on the significance of this changing role and how this can give us an insight into the development of concepts of sanctity.¹⁰⁴ He shows how this change in representation came about through a profound change in discourse. Whereas a Late Antique desert monk was subject to the constant unwanted attentions of aggressive demons, early medieval monks were supposed to be immune to such attacks. Demons were no longer used to explain sexual desire, because the early medieval monastery was supposed to be a pure space, its members immune to such temptations. Demons are seldom encountered within the confines of the monastic space but rather are subjects to be expelled from the wilderness or from possessed people, thus showing the efficacy of the monks' prayers. As Diem notes: "This profound change in discourse is rooted in a fundamental shifts of the monastic concept. In contrast to the communities of desert monks in the eastern Mediterranean, Frankish monasteries were founded by kings, bishops and noble families. Their aim was not so much to give ascetic individuals an opportunity to gain perfection in an ascetic struggle, but to shape places of institutionalised sanctity where monks and nuns prayed for the earthly well-being and the eternal salvation of the founders and their families. Both the monastic space and its inhabitants were expected to be pure and free from all sexuality."¹⁰⁵ While monks and nuns were still undoubtedly subject to demonic temptation, for the hagiographer, the main focus of such temptation shifted from sexual desires to pride and rebellion. In their Rules, Benedict and

104. Diem 2004, 52.

105. Diem 2004, 66–67.

the Master are much more concerned with the sin of murmuring, which is corrosive of community life, than with sexual misconduct, while Columbanus does regulate with regard to sexual acts in his *Penitential*.¹⁰⁶

This change in representation is already seen in Sulpicius Severus's hagiography, in which Martin is never endangered by demons but instead performs spectacular exorcisms that prove his saintly status.¹⁰⁷ This is also the case with Jonas's representation of Columbanus. He is never tempted by demons but rather reveals his sanctity by exorcising them. In Book 2, Athala and members of his community perform exorcisms, while these are also used to explain the causes of monastic dissent and disobedience. The rhetorical technique whereby monks or nuns who endanger the cohesion of the community through rebellion or disobedience become demonized is also a feature of the *Life of the Jura Fathers*.¹⁰⁸ In this work, demons cause monks to become proud, disobedient, and quarrelsome or to abandon the monastery.¹⁰⁹ According to Diem, demons receive here a new narrative function: "the behaviour of monks who threaten the monastic order and endanger the community, or commit acts of opposition against the abbots of the Jura fathers, becomes 'demonised.'"¹¹⁰ This device was later also employed by Jonas, who demonizes the rebellious monks of Bobbio who leave the monastery under Athala's abbacy, while the nuns who try to flee Faremoutiers are depicted as having been incited to do so by demons.¹¹¹

Jonas's demonology can further be studied in his *VJ*, which was heavily influenced by the *Vita Antonii*. However, as Diem has again discussed, Jonas omits three key features of the *Vita Antonii* concerning Antony's epic fights with demons, his teachings on demonology, and his struggle against pagans and heretics. "By omitting the theme of demon fights and temptations and reducing demons to easy targets and victims of the saint's exorcisms, Jonas followed a general trend in Merovingian hagiography. As impressive as Athanasius's Anthony may have been, Merovingians were not interested in saints who had to fight temptations."¹¹²

This difference in the representation of the supernatural is an important characteristic of Jonas's work and one that distinguishes it from earlier monastic and

106. Columbanus, *Paenitentiale* A 3, 7; B 2, 3, 4.

107. Diem 2004, 58; Graus 1989.

108. Noted by Diem 2004, 62.

109. *VPJ* 33–34; 87–89; 27–28; 35; 91.

110. Diem 2004, 62.

111. *VC* 2.1: 19. Diem 2004, 62, notes the parallels: "This rhetorical technique occasionally, although not very often, also appears in late Merovingian saints' lives, as, for example, in the *Vita Columbani* of Jonas of Bobbio."

112. Diem 2008, 25.

later Carolingian hagiography. This is certainly not the case in Irish and Anglo-Saxon hagiography from slightly later in the seventh and eighth centuries, in which demons and angels are much more prominent and active participants, although in Irish hagiography demons were characteristically involved to explain the power of Druids and sorcerers.¹¹³ Instead, in the VC, as in the *Life of the Jura Fathers*, it is the devil and his demons who are held responsible for stirring up monastic dissent. It is the devil, generally referred to by Jonas as the *antiquus anguis*, who stirs up Agrestius to attack Columbanus's monastic customs, the Luxeuil monks to rebel under Athala, and some of the Faremoutiers nuns to flee their monastery. In the case of the nuns, they are deceived by the devil, who is portrayed by Jonas as a clever trickster. Having successfully tempted some of the more inexperienced nuns to leave the community, the devil, standing to the left (*astitit ad levam*), waits for them at night outside the enclosure, where they intend to make their escape. However, as the night is dark and foggy, the nuns become lost, and the devil "by a trick simulated a light in the form of an oil lamp" (*diabolus ac lumen in modum lucernae arte qua valuit assimulavit*), by which ruse he leads them not back into the world but to the monastery.¹¹⁴ The devil brings about their destruction this way, as on returning to the community, the nuns refuse to confess and soon die impenitent. Their deaths are attended by a group of demons in the guise of Ethiopians, a representation of the demonic also found in the *Vita Antonii* and in Rufinus's *History of the Monks of Egypt*. The episode essentially allowed Jonas to tell a moral tale about monastic dissent and the importance of confession. The devil, although seen as a real entity and as the instigator of dissent, is nonetheless portrayed in a rather passive way. Unlike in the *Vita Antonii*, where demons traumatize and assault Antony, here the devil does not physically harm the nuns but actually leads them back to the monastery. This is generally the case also in Book 1, where in no instance does the devil or demons tempt Columbanus, but rather the demons are the passive victims of his powers as an exorcist. The characteristically undemonic nature of the VC, as well as that of Jonas's other saints' Lives, is one important element of difference between Jonas's hagiography and the *Vita Antonii*.

The minor role played by demons in Jonas's writings is also seen with other supernatural beings. Angels are very rare; they only appear once in the VC and are completely absent from the VV and the VJ. Although many of the deaths

113. See Picard 1981; Stancliffe 1992. See Adomnán, *Life of Columba* 2.11; 2.16; 2.17; 2.34 on demons. Adomnán, *Life of Columba* 2.16 provides a useful parallel for the importance of similar prayers, blessings, and so on, as Jonas notes were customary in Columbanian communities and which were the subject of Agrestius's complaint at the Synod of Mácon; VC 2.9 (O'Hara and Wood 2017, 197). I am grateful to Thomas Charles-Edwards for this point.

114. VC 2.19: 273.

that Jonas relates in Book 2 are accompanied by angelic singing, angels generally do not appear at the deathbed scene. Angels remain firmly in the celestial spheres, where the souls of a select few do encounter them. Jonas reports that the soul of Gibitrudis was conducted to heaven by angels,¹¹⁵ while the Bobbio monk Agibodus had a similar experience before he died, when his soul left his body and he saw “eternal light prepared for itself and the sun shining with a sparkling gleam.”¹¹⁶ An angel told him that he would enter heaven that day and that he should say farewell to his brothers. These visions of angels only occur, therefore, in relation to deathbed scenes.¹¹⁷ They are not present in a mundane sense. The only exception to this is when an angel appears to Columbanus in Alamannia and persuades him not to undertake missionary work to the Slavs but to go instead to Italy.¹¹⁸ This scenario seems to have been a way for Jonas to justify Columbanus’s decision not to preach to the heathen, while showing that his foundation of Bobbio was preordained. In this case, the appearance of the angel could resolve uncomfortable or unanswered questions, such as why Columbanus did not go east to preach to the Slavs. There may well have been some debate within the Columbanian communities of Jonas’s time concerning Columbanus’s role as a missionary. Jonas would have been well aware of Columbanus’s ambivalence about preaching to the heathen from Columbanus’s *Ep.* 4, and this may have been an opportunity to explain why Columbanus decided to go south to Italy.¹¹⁹ Evangelization was clearly important to Jonas and his contemporaries, and the narrative device of the angel—the only time one appears in Book 1—may well have been used to address concerns that Columbanus did not do enough as a missionary.¹²⁰ It was also simply the case that the Slavs had not been politically united enough at this time for Columbanus to work with them.¹²¹

The minimalist use of angels in Jonas stands in stark contrast to the writings of Gregory the Great, “the most influential angelological writer of the early Middle Ages,”¹²² who depicted Benedict in Book 2 of the *Dialogues* as living surrounded by angels and demons.¹²³ For Gregory, angels were taken as models of virtuous

115. VC 2.12: 261.

116. *vidit aeternam lucem sibi paratam solemque rutilo fulgore micantem.* VC 2.25: 291.

117. Consider the Irish phrase *cath anmae*, in Latin *contentio animae*; an example is described by Adomnán in the *Life of Columba* 3.13. I am grateful to Thomas Charles-Edwards for this information.

118. VC 1.27: 216–217.

119. Columbanus, *Ep.* 4.5: 31. On how angels could resolve tensions, see Mayr-Harting 1998, 4–13.

120. On Columbanus’s role as a missionary, see the contrasting views of Wood 2001b and Walker 1970b.

121. See Wolfram forthcoming.

122. Leyser 2001, 21.

123. See *Dialogues* 2.4; 2.35.

leadership.¹²⁴ Angels are also prominent in the earlier *Regula magistri*, and although Benedict relied heavily on this text, he cut out many of the references to angels. As Conrad Leyser has discussed, the same pattern of minimizing the role of angels is apparent in the *VPJ*, where “The muting of angels seems to represent a conscious decision on the part of the narrator. As his account unfolds it appears that the harmony of monastic community, and the proper functioning of abbatial authority, can best be maintained without the disruptive presence of supernatural beings.”¹²⁵ The emphasis instead is on the operation of authority within the community, which Benedict also chose to emphasize in his Rule. The “naturalism” of the Jura fathers stands in stark contrast to the “magic realist landscape” of the *Regula magistri*.¹²⁶ This naturalism of the Jura author seems also to be the case for Jonas. In Jonas, the appearance of angels is used in much the same way as his treatment of demons but in this case to show the consequences of a life that adhered to the monastic system. The lack of prominence given to the supernatural in Jonas’s work—so different from the thought-world of Gregory of Tours and Gregory the Great—can be seen as a “realist” element in Jonas’s writing but also as part of his insistence that it was only adhering to the monastic life in community that ensured one of a blessed death and afterlife.

ACCESS AND EXCLUSION: JONAS, THE MEROVINGIANS, AND THE FRANKISH ELITES

The demonization of the dowager queen Brunhild and her grandson King Theuderic II is one of the most distinctive features of the *VC*, and the episodes of conflict between the Merovingian royal family and the saint are the most dramatic in Jonas’s hagiography.¹²⁷ The conflict was essentially about dynastic power politics and control of Columbanus’s monastic foundations. Theuderic had at first been receptive to Columbanus’s influence, often going to the saint to seek his prayers.¹²⁸ However, when Columbanus criticized the king for not having children with a wife instead of his concubines, he provoked the enmity of Brunhild, who feared for her own position at court. Jonas famously characterized her as a “second Jezebel” and as being incited by the devil.¹²⁹ When Columbanus visited the royal villa at Bruyères-le-Châtel, Brunhild presented the

124. Leyser 2001, 21.

125. Leyser 2001, 15.

126. Leyser 2001, 11.

127. This conflict was retold in later hagiographic works and in Fredegar. See Diem 2007a, 531 n. 58.

128. *VC* 1.18: 187 (O’Hara and Wood 2017, 132).

129. *VC* 1.18: 187 (O’Hara and Wood 2017, 132).

king's illegitimate children to the holy man for his blessing. Columbanus refused to bless the children, "instead of being seen to emerge from whore-houses" (*quia de lupanaribus emergerunt*), and predicted that they would never gain the throne.¹³⁰ His judgment was miraculously underlined when, as he left the court, a great noise shook the whole building. The incident provided Brunhild with the pretext to place an interdict on the neighboring monasteries, prohibiting the monks from leaving the monastic confines and forbidding anyone to give aid to the communities. This prompted Columbanus to go directly to the king, who was then at the royal villa at Époisses. The saint showed his anger by refusing to enter the villa and declining to eat the meal prepared (*regio cultu*) for him.¹³¹ In this demonstration of protest, in which Columbanus refused to enter the villa or accept the king's hospitality, the saint was following strict Irish custom, in which, not unlike a modern hunger strike, one fasted against an opponent in the hope of winning a dispute (*troscud*).¹³² Again, Columbanus's displeasure was accompanied by a miracle, as the lavishly prepared food, wine, and cider that had been set before him shattered in front of the royal servants. This caused Theuderic and Brunhild to seek reconciliation. However, when Columbanus heard that the king had returned to the company of his concubines, he sent a letter threatening him with excommunication. Brunhild responded by turning Theuderic against Columbanus and getting the nobles and bishops to besmirch (*macularet*) the saint's religious practices and Rule.¹³³ Brunhild shifted the contest away from royal dynastic politics to the status and legitimacy of Columbanus's Rule. The king went to Luxeuil, where he confronted Columbanus. There were two main issues of contention: Columbanus's nonconformity to Frankish practices and access to monastic space. These were essentially problems of cultural conflict. Theuderic questioned why Columbanus differed from the customs of everyone else and why all Christians were not allowed entry into the "inner confines" (*septa secretiora*) of the monastery.¹³⁴ These were issues relating to Columbanus's entrenched Irish customs, which he was in no way willing to compromise. Columbanus warned that if the king tried to go against the discipline of the rule (*regularis disciplinae*), then he would refuse his patronage, and he warned, further, that Theuderic's kingdom and family would be destroyed.¹³⁵ On hearing this, Theuderic, who had at this point stepped inside the refectory (one of the off-limit zones for the laity), was terrified and quickly retreated. The

130. VC 1.19: 188.

131. VC 1.19: 188–189.

132. See Kelly 1988: 182–183.

133. VC 1.19: 189–190.

134. VC 1.19: 190.

135. VC 1.19: 190 (O'Hara and Wood 2017, 137–138).

outcome of this confrontation, which had shifted from being a moral and dynastic one to one over authority and access to sacred space, was Theuderic's decision to banish Columbanus and the Insular members of his community from Burgundy and deport him back to Ireland. Mayke de Jong has seen this dramatic conflict as one of rival places of power, between the sacred space of the monastery and the contaminated royal court.¹³⁶ Diem has seen these episodes as being instructive of how rulers should respect the inviolability of monastic space.¹³⁷ This was a lesson that Theuderic finally learned; Jonas saw the destruction of Brunhild, Theuderic, and the Austrasian royal line by Chlothar II as divine punishment for their mistreatment of Columbanus. It should be emphasized that Jonas is clearly a biased source in his account of Brunhild and Theuderic. From the contemporary evidence of the letters of Gregory the Great, Brunhild is a key player in the success of the Roman mission to the Anglo-Saxons, and Gregory writes warmly about Brunhild and her support of religious life, albeit within a diplomatic context.¹³⁸ The breakdown in relations in 610 between Columbanus and the Austrasian court should not be seen to obliterate the long years of royal support that preceded it, support that Jonas could not possibly reveal. Given the new political context in the period after 613, the *damnatio memoriae* of Brunhild and Theuderic must have already been in place before Jonas began writing. The malevolent influence of powerful women may also have been something Jonas wished to emphasize particularly in his representation of Brunhild, salient now that Clovis II's mother, Nanthild, who had served as regent, had died in 642, and the young king was increasingly under the influence of his magnates. Clovis II would not marry Balthild until some years later, but when Jonas completed the VC in 642 or 643, one of the aims of the work may have been to educate the impressionable young king on the dangers of powerful women through the example of Brunhild.

While demonizing the Austrasian royal family for its opposition to and expulsion of Columbanus, Jonas drew attention to Columbanus's support of Chlothar II to legitimize the new Neustrian regime. The events of 613 by which Chlothar annihilated his rivals and united the Merovingian kingdoms under his sole authority were represented by Jonas as the fulfillment of a threefold prophecy made by Columbanus. When Theuderic banished Columbanus, the saint prophesied that within three years, Chlothar would become the sole ruler.¹³⁹ In contrast to Brunhild and Theuderic, Chlothar II is portrayed by Jonas

136. De Jong 2001, 307–312.

137. Diem 2007a, 531–538.

138. Gregory the Great, *Ep.* 6.60; 11.48.

139. VC 1.20: 198.

as the good king whose rise to power is a consequence of the obedience he showed to Columbanus. When Chlothar received Columbanus at his court, the saint was treated “as though he were a heavenly gift” (*velut caelestem munus*), and although the king wished him to stay within his territory, he did not pressure him but gave him every assistance on his journey.¹⁴⁰ When conflict broke out between Theuderic and Theudebert, Chlothar was asked to take sides, but he followed Columbanus’s advice and remained neutral. Columbanus reiterated his prophecy that the king would conquer both of his rival kingdoms.¹⁴¹ When Columbanus reached the court of Theudebert II, he was again warmly received, “as though he were enemy booty” (*velut ex hostium preda*)¹⁴² and offered a place to settle within Theudebert’s territories, but Theudebert failed to heed the saint’s advice to become a cleric, at which Columbanus prophesied that he would become one despite himself. Following Theudebert’s defeat, his murder on Brunhild’s order after his forced clericalization, Theuderic’s sudden death at Metz, and Chlothar’s brutal execution of Brunhild and Theuderic’s sons the following year, Jonas triumphantly concluded that Columbanus’s prophecy had been fulfilled.¹⁴³ Columbanus is thus presented in the guise of an Old Testament prophet, berating and blessing kings. These representations of Columbanus and his prophetic powers are means by which Jonas legitimizes the rise to power of Chlothar II and the new Neustrian regime, while at the same time emphasizing for the contemporary political elite the importance of their continued patronage of the Columbanian *familia*.¹⁴⁴

In the *damnatio memoriae* of Brunhild and the legitimization of Chlothar II’s regime by means of Columbanus’s prophecy, we can detect a new, more public and political element influencing hagiographical writing. Regime change led to the emergence of a new elite in Merovingian Gaul, closely allied to the Columbanian *familia* and its ideals. The *damnatio memoriae* of Brunhild and her progeny by Chlothar II in the Edict of Paris of 614, in which the legislation of Sigibert I, but not that of his sons, was recognized, is reflected in Jonas’s pretense that Sigibert was responsible for Columbanus’s foundation of Annegray.¹⁴⁵ In reality, this was anachronistic, as it was more likely that Sigibert’s brother Guntram was behind the foundation of Annegray, while Sigibert’s son, Childebert II, was instrumental in the foundation of Luxeuil.¹⁴⁶

140. VC 1.24: 207.

141. VC 1.24: 207–208.

142. VC 1.27: 211.

143. VC 1.29: 220.

144. See Diem 2007a, 537.

145. *Edictum Clotarii II*.

146. For further discussion, see Wood 1998; O’Hara 2015.

Jonas minimized the role played by the Austrasian royal family in the patronage of the early Columbanian communities while highlighting Chlothar II's support of Columbanus.

Jonas was astutely aware of the new political environment, and his hagiography reflects the emerging use of hagiographic texts in a more public and political sphere. Works such as Sulpicius Severus's *Vita Martini* or the *VPJ* were written by ascetics for a small number of other ascetics. While the saints in these works did berate kings and prophecy, they were not political texts. With the likes of the *VC*, Sisebut's *Vita Desiderii*, and the *Vita Domnae Balthildis*, writers were now using hagiography as media for influencing social discourse, indicating the increased merging of monastic and political power structures during the course of the seventh century.¹⁴⁷ Jonas was similarly attempting, through the medium of his hagiography and through the textual communities linked to the royal court, to influence the social discourse of the ruling elite that would in turn serve to create a more cohesive Christian kingdom. Jonas's saints' Lives can be seen as "semantic maps for the exploration of new territory,"¹⁴⁸ addressing not only a network of monastic communities but also royal, aristocratic, and episcopal audiences and seeking to influence the social discourse of the elites of the Merovingian kingdom through the textual communities that engaged with these texts. The particular political-monastic vision that Jonas sought to advance in his hagiography is a kingdom where the rulers, like the Old Testament kings of Israel, heed, respect, and work together with the monk-bishops and abbots of his own day but where the boundaries between the secular and monastic spheres are maintained and protected. Merovingian hagiographical narratives were, as Jamie Kreiner has so eloquently shown, "propositions pitched to a heterogeneous elite culture. Their ideas were not a retroactive justification or 'cover' for power that elites already held. Instead, they were a conversation about what kind of principles of power and government should be fostered and rewarded. . . . The *vitae* suggested not only what elites ought to do with the resources they had; they also redefined what could count as a resource in the first place. And in order to redefine what the kingdom valued, the hagiographers had to involve the ruling class in its own refashioning."¹⁴⁹

The close association that led to monasteries becoming aristocratic centers of power and identity is another distinctive feature of the seventh century and one

147. Kreiner 2014b, 10–18, suggests that many Merovingian hagiographical texts were principally interested in addressing an elite culture and debating the entitlements and obligations of governance (local, ecclesiastical, royal).

148. Stock 1990, 108, 150.

149. Kreiner 2014b, 16–17.

that we can clearly trace in the VC.¹⁵⁰ In the hagiography of Jonas, we can detect for the first time the rise in power of the Frankish aristocracy. Friedrich Prinz has remarked that Jonas's saints' Lives reflect a new Frankish self-consciousness that arose from the new symbiosis between political and religious powers and was substantially shaped by the aristocracy. Jonas's hagiography, according to Prinz, marked "a new epoch" in this respect, as the author was part of the monastic movement linked to aristocratic and court circles and knew personally many of the leading members in this group.¹⁵¹ He has characterized this period as "a cultic-religious new anchoring of the aristocracy" ("einer kultisch-religiösen Neuverankerung des Adels").¹⁵² The aristocracy occupies a noticeably more prominent role in Jonas's hagiography, much more so than in earlier works of hagiography, and this attention to nobility and status becomes a pronounced feature of subsequent Merovingian saints' Lives as the phenomenon of "aristocratic sanctity" (*Adelsheiligkeit*) developed, a view that noble birth predisposed one in a special way to sanctity.

Jonas employs a range of terminology for the aristocracy. They are variously termed *aulici*, *inlustres viri*, *optimates*, *nobiles*, *procres*, and *sublimes*. The nobles at the court of Sigibert I, for example, are called *aulici*,¹⁵³ while Vedast attends a feast hosted by one of the nobles of Chlothar I, Hocinus, in the company of Chlothar's *aulici*.¹⁵⁴ Similarly, a noble who visited Vedast in Rheims is termed *aliqui ex inlustribus viris*,¹⁵⁵ while before he became bishop of Noyon, Eligius was described by Jonas as an *inluster vir*.¹⁵⁶ By far the most common term Jonas uses, however, is *nobilis* with its variants. The term is used a total of twenty-three times. The wife of Waldelenus, duke of the Trans-Jura region, is characterized as *genere et prudentia nobilem*,¹⁵⁷ while Berthoara, founder of a Columbanian convent in Bourges, is *nobilis genere et religione*.¹⁵⁸ The *vir nobilis* Chagneric,

150. On the Frankish aristocracy in general and its role in the monastic movement in particular during this period, see Fox 2014; Helvétius 2012; Tatum 2007; Le Jan 1995; Murray 1994; Prinz 1981; Werner 1976; Irsigler 1979. See also Mériaux 2006b, 2005.

151. "Jonas' Viten, so sehr sie formal von älteren Vorbildern abhängen mögen, zeigen zwar kein 'fränkisches Bewußtsein' des Verfassers, was bei seiner italienischen Herkunft nicht verwundert, aber sie schildern uns damit nur um so glaubwürdiger die politisch-religiösen Kräfte, welche das fränkische Eigenbewußtsein trugen und entwickelten, vor allem die führende Rolle des gallorömischen wie auch des germanischen Adels in diesem Prozeß. Jonas' Lebensbeschreibungen eröffnen durch ihren Inhalt eine neue Epoche, die der Autor aus eigener Anschauung miterlebt hat und deren Hauptpersonen er kannte und darstellte." Prinz 1965, 490.

152. Prinz 1967, 542.

153. VC 1.6: 162.

154. VV 7: 315.

155. VV 4: 312.

156. VC 2.10: 255.

157. VC 1.14: 174.

158. VC 2.10: 255.

a companion of King Theudebert, was a man *nobilitatis sapientia vallatus*.¹⁵⁹ Athala was *nobilis natione, sed nobilior sanctitate*,¹⁶⁰ while Bertulf was also *genere nobilis*.¹⁶¹ Romaric, the founder of Remiremont, another companion of King Theudebert, was *primis nobilitatibus*,¹⁶² while John, like Columbanus, Eustasius, and Vedast, is seen to have been supported and honored by the Frankish king and nobles (*veneratione regum Francorum adque nobilium fulceretur*).¹⁶³ Jonas used a range of status-specific vocabulary to distinguish the aristocratic background and status of his subjects, and this, in turn, reflects the aristocratic nature of the Columbanian monastic network and the status-consciousness of the new aristocracy. This is also evident when we contrast Jonas's use of such terminology with other, earlier works of hagiography in which we find a much less frequent use of status-specific vocabulary.¹⁶⁴

In his description of Luxeuil as a center of education for aristocratic children and the close personal connections between Columbanus and noble families, Jonas provides many examples of this new relationship between monastic and aristocratic power. He was writing for the extended royal and aristocratic circles of the Columbanian *familia*, and, as we have seen, he was careful to emphasize the exalted status of his subjects. As Barbara Rosenwein has highlighted, the courtly culture that developed around Chlothar II in Paris, which was heavily influenced by Columbanian ideals, was a much more somber and restrained "emotional community" than that of the Austrasian court of Sigibert I and Brunhild.¹⁶⁵ There was an increased emphasis on status and hierarchy, rather than on affectionate displays of emotion, as had been the case with the Austrasian courtly culture of Gregory of Tours and Venantius Fortunatus: "Columbanus's ascetic impulse and the emotional norms that went with it were absorbed as well as adapted and transformed by the courtiers of Neustria of the next generation. . . . The emphasis on male-male bonds turned the court into a monastery manqué. Only their celebration of status showed the attraction of secular habits. The Neustrian courtiers incorporated hierarchy into the Columbanian model by making deference part of their male fraternity culture."¹⁶⁶ We can see this in the letters of Desiderius of Cahors and in Jonas's formal address to the abbots at the beginning of the VC, where he refers to them as *domini* and to

159. VC 1.26: 209.

160. VC 2.1: 230.

161. VC 2.23: 280.

162. VC 2.10: 254.

163. VJ 18: 340.

164. See the important study of Keller 1977.

165. Rosenwein 2006, 130–162, at 130. See also Hen 2007 on the Neustrian court.

166. Rosenwein 2006, 161

himself as *peccator*.¹⁶⁷ The emphasis on aristocratic origins also becomes more prominent in subsequent hagiography, such as in the *Vita Germani* and the *Vita Wandregiseli*, both about Frankish aristocrats who became Columbanian monks and abbots. Hagen Keller has compared the sixth-century *Life of the Jura Fathers* with the late-seventh-century *Vita Germani* and found that even though monasteries such as those in the Jura consisted of many aristocrats, their status was not explicitly emphasized.¹⁶⁸ In the *Vita Germani*, on the other hand, and in similar works, nobility has become almost a prerequisite for sanctity. Germanus's noble background, for example, is strongly stressed. The author notes that he came from a senatorial family in Trier and gives the names of his father and brothers, Opthomarus and Numerian, who became prominent at the Neustrian courts of Dagobert I and Sigibert III.¹⁶⁹ This can be contrasted with the *Life of the Jura Fathers*, whose author gives but the briefest note of Romanus's family background.¹⁷⁰ Like that of Wandregisel, Germanus's aristocratic status is emphasized when, on deciding to become a monk, he takes three servant boys with him,¹⁷¹ while at the monastery, his participation in manual labor (cutting wood) is seen as a remarkable testament of his humility when a man of such status would condescend to do this kind of work.¹⁷² This aristocratic world is quite removed from the early community at Annegray, which had to eat roots and tree bark in order to survive a shortage of food.¹⁷³ Now the mere act of renouncing an aristocratic lifestyle to become a monk was seen as the first step toward sanctity. In Jonas's hagiography, with his status-specific vocabulary and accounts of aristocratic families, we can see the beginnings of *Adelsheiligkeit* and the growing rise in prominence of the Frankish aristocracy.

To conclude: this chapter began by considering Jonas's laconic account of Columbanus's death and what this reveals about the place of the individual holy man in the context of the VC. We saw how Jonas's focus shifts in Book 2 and how this is central to the conception of the work as a whole and the move away from the holy man to the holy community, the significance of which Diem has so meticulously delineated. We went on to consider the unusual lack of attention given to relics in the Columbanian tradition, which may have stemmed from Columbanus's stress on the active devotion of the community, evident in his insistence that each member had to wear a Eucharistic chrismal. This emphasis

167. VC, *Epistula ad Waldebertum et Bobolenum*, 144.

168. Keller 1977. See Mayr-Harting 1976 for a different emphasis.

169. *Vita Germani* 1: 33.

170. "He came from a not insignificant family . . . from Gallia Sequanorum." *VPJ* 4: 101.

171. *Vita Germani* 4: 34. See *Vita Wandregiseli* 9: 17.

172. *Vita Germani* 5: 35.

173. VC 1.7: 165.

on creating a holy community and the tension between access and exclusion that we can discern in the sources were further traced in Jonas's atmospheric foundation narratives. Jonas was less explicit than the Lerinian and Jura authors in using Old Testament imagery to describe the process by which the landscape was transformed by the presence of the holy man in founding his communities. A close comparative reading of Jonas's foundation narratives also reveals how he sought to give preeminence to Columbanus's foundation of Bobbio over that of Luxeuil. The shift in ideas of sanctity during the seventh century, which can be traced in Jonas's hagiography, was most forcefully seen in how the author of the *Vita Wandregiseli* portrayed Bobbio as a model community that inspired the founder of Fontanella, rather than describing an encounter with an individual holy man. The measured ways in which Jonas used accounts of death, the afterlife, and the supernatural—which clearly distinguish him from earlier hagiographers such as Gregory of Tours and Gregory the Great—also signals a new way of writing about sanctity and community in the seventh century. While the growing power and influence of the Frankish elite is also mirrored in his hagiography.

Epilogue

WHILE JONAS'S TWO OCCASIONAL SAINTS' LIVES WERE PRODUCED to bestow on ancient foundations—the bishopric of Cambrai-Arras and the monastery of Réomé—institutional identities centered on their dead patrons, Jonas's task in the VC was more complex. He could not pass over the recent crises within the Columbanian communities, although he could repress some less acceptable aspects of Columbanus's career. The image Jonas presents in his hagiographical history is one of seamless continuity since the days of Columbanus. One of Jonas's aims may have been to give the geographically distant communities and their patrons a shared Columbanian identity. But perhaps more important than this was the apologetic aim of the VC: to rehabilitate the reputation of Columbanus. This was necessary following the Agrestius affair of 626/627, when the rebel monk publicly slandered the saint at the Synod of Mâcon. Not only did Agrestius accuse Columbanus of heresy, but he also claimed that the saint's *instituta* or monastic practices were heretical. Eustasius successfully defended these accusations at the synod but not without concessions that saw Columbanian monastic practices modified with the introduction of the *RB* and the community's conformance regarding Easter. The introduction of the *RB* may have had more to do with making a statement about orthodoxy following Agrestius's attack than introducing new monastic practices.¹ It was only once these reforms had been adopted that the Frankish elite and episcopate began to promote the expansion of Columbanian monasticism.²

The Bobbio community (which initiated the *Vita*) was outside this expansionary movement, although it is likely that it, too, had modified the severity of the Rule by the 640s. In its ethos, Bobbio may have been more conservative than the Frankish communities. Having the relics of Columbanus, the Bobbio community may have felt more keenly the necessity of preserving his memory and defending his saintly reputation. This traditionalism may also have been due to the senior Insular members of the community who had followed Columbanus after their expulsion from Luxeuil and under Athala, who probably left Luxeuil to follow Columbanus after doctrinal differences. Athala was Columbanus's

1. I owe this idea to Clare Stancliffe. The importance of the *RB* as a key text of Roman orthodoxy for the later Anglo-Saxon missionaries is discussed in Palmer 2009, 187–204.

2. VC 2.10: 255.

closest follower and nominated successor. The closeness between the two men is clearly apparent in *Ep.* 4, which Columbanus wrote from Nantes to Athala after his banishment from Luxeuil in 610. As Athala's personal assistant or *minister*, Jonas, too, likely followed the conservative stance of Athala, as opposed to the reformed Frankish communities. Although Jonas is never explicit about such matters, the VC can be read as a defense of Columbanus's sanctity and a critique of the crises of disobedience that had especially characterized the Frankish communities in the years following the saint's death. Albrecht Diem noted that Columbanus is called a *vir Dei* ninety-five times (more than any other early-medieval saint) and that the only one lauded as such in Book 2 is Athala, whom Jonas considered Columbanus's true abbatial successor.³

The structure and function of Book 2 were an integral part of Jonas's conception for the *Vita* and helped serve his apologetic purpose. It allowed him to show to the present generation of Columbanian monks and nuns the consequences of disobedience and the importance of maintaining Columbanus's ethos. Jonas may have been more autonomous as the abbot of the double community of Marchiennes-Hamage at the time when he wrote the *Vita*. This position also undoubtedly influenced his decision to include a lengthy section on the female religious community of Faremoutiers, which would have served to edify the female community at Marchiennes-Hamage. It does seem likely that the idea to write a second book was Jonas's own and not part of the original Bobbio commission, as Stancliffe convincingly argued: "Jonas's decision to write a second book devoted to the doings of Columbanus's disciples cannot be set down either to Abbot Bertulf's original request, or to Jonas's adoption of any model; rather, it appears to be entirely his own, original choice."⁴ As the abbot of a female religious community, assuming that he is rightly linked to Hamage, he could use the example of the Faremoutiers nuns to show his own community and other female communities the contrasting fates of those who were obedient and those who were not. He did the same with the Bobbio and Luxeuil chapters. Obedience is the leitmotif that runs throughout the VC. The wonderful animal miracle accounts are foremost parables of obedience and deference, modes of communication through which Jonas sought to impart important lessons to his audience. These lessons needed telling in the years when Jonas was writing, a period of uncertainty for the Columbanian *familia*.⁵

3. Diem 2007a, 550 and n. 166. Diem also notes that Athala is the only figure in Book 2 who performs a significant number of miracles, many of which are similar to those performed by Columbanus. Jonas does term Eustasius *venerandus vir Dominum* (VC 2.7: 242) and *vir sanctus* (VC 2.9: 246), although he is usually styled *venerabilis vir*. Athala, on the other hand, is generally termed *beatus* by Jonas.

4. Stancliffe 2001, 201.

5. Wood 1982, 66–67.

Jonas wrote the *VC* following the death of Dagobert II in 639 and during the minority of Dagobert's son Clovis II, when the Neustrian mayor of the palace, Aega, exercised considerable power in the kingdom. Aega appears to have been hostile to the Faremoutiers community, and his sudden death in 642 is seen by Jonas as divine retribution for his antagonism toward the community.⁶ The Columbanian communities may have feared that the strong support shown by Chlothar II and his son, Dagobert II, might wane during the minority of Clovis II, and so the *VC* can also be read in a political context that sought to legitimize the new regime of Chlothar II and his sons, while emphasizing the continuing importance of the patronage of the Neustrian line of Merovingian kings. Jonas's connections with the Merovingian court are evident in his summons to Chalon-sur-Saône in Burgundy to meet Queen Balhild, the widow of Clovis II, and her infant son, Chlothar III, in November 659.⁷ The nature of their meeting is not known, but it must have been a matter of some importance for the queen to summon the abbot in midwinter. It was while resting from the journey at the monastery of Réomé that Jonas was asked to write the *VJ* about the founder of the community.

As a meditation on abbatial authority, Jonas's message in the *VJ* is found primarily in chapter 18, the longest chapter of the work, deeply grounded in the monastic philosophy of Cassian, which focuses in great detail on the sins of gluttony, vanity, and arrogance. Why did Jonas chose to focus specifically on these sins? Why did he need to insert a lengthy discourse on this in the life of a sixth-century monastic founder? Perhaps it was because it needed addressing for the abbatial audience he was writing for and which he sought to influence. The opportunity to write the Life of an early monastic founder gave him the chance to address some of the dangers that could beset his aristocratic abbatial contemporaries who were closely connected with Frankish court culture. The dangers of arrogance, pride, and gluttony are issues he likewise explicitly addresses in the *VC*, and he opens his *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines* with a discourse on the qualities an abbess should have, which he modeled on the *RB*. He stresses that the abbess "must be noble not so much in birth as in wisdom and sanctity, so that she, who toils by night over her speaking in order to educate the souls by correct instruction, does not contradict [her speaking] through her own deeds. For indeed, subordinates imitate the form of their superiors' deeds more than they lend their ear to the teaching that is introduced [to them]."⁸ This

6. See *VC* 2.17.

7. See the preface to the *VJ*.

8. *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines* 1.

emphasis on teaching by example, not by words, is also stressed in the VC and the VV.

As an abbot himself, Jonas clearly thought about and was deeply concerned about the nature of monastic leadership and the qualities required for this demanding role. He appears to have been influenced by Benedict's teaching on the responsibility of the abbot, which is seen in his *Regula ad virgines* and in the VJ, when John is persuaded to return to his community of Réomé from Lérins, lest he be judged for abandoning the souls entrusted to him.⁹ In the increasingly stratified and status-conscious world of seventh-century Francia, it was becoming more and more important to stress the humility of saints. Wandregisel's future sanctity could be gauged while he was still a courtier, because he was willing to get his clothes dirty in front of other aristocrats to help a stranger dislodge his cart from the mud,¹⁰ while the aristocratic Germanus humbled himself by chopping and carrying wood in the monastery.¹¹ Both Jonas and the later hagiographers of Wandregisel and Germanus tried to steer their audiences away from the *falamenta*, the trappings of the world, toward a true *cultus religionis*, a strict devotion to the monastic life.

In his short work on Vedast, Jonas portrays him as a missionary bishop who acts as a spiritual adviser to Clovis prior to his baptism by Bishop Remigius of Rheims. He shows how a bishop should relate to the royal court: as a spiritual adviser, a religious instructor, and a model of humility and moderation. The bishop goes to a feast prepared for Clovis by one of his nobles, not because he wants to share in the revelries but because it presents a good opportunity to preach the Christian faith. He is a model of sobriety, in contrast to the drunken Frankish nobles and the excesses of court, something Jonas also touches upon in the VC, where the court and the monastery are presented as binary opposites. By his holy way of life and example, Vedast implants the faith in his diocese. By subtly drawing parallels between Vedast and Columbanus in their attitude toward the royal court and in the kinds of miracles they work, Jonas communicated to the monk-bishops of the Frankish kingdom the necessity to persevere in the ascetic life while carrying out the pastoral ministry of their office. In all of these works, Jonas was writing for the wider network of the Columbanian communities and their associates.

When the Lives are studied as a complete dossier, they show complementary and interconnected themes and concerns. The VC was the work of an apologist with a specific agenda; primarily, it sought to revindicate the reputation of

9. VJ 4, reflecting the influence of RB 2.6: 27.

10. *Vita Wandregiseli* 7: 16.

11. *Vita Germani* 5: 35.

Columbanus, and Book 2 was a clever way to critique the changes that had come about within the Columbanian communities since the saint's death. It was foremost a Bobbio project, which was taken further on Jonas's own terms after he became abbot of Marchiennes-Hamage. The *VV* was probably written around the same time on the commission of Bishop Autbert of Cambrai-Arras, who, whether he had been a Luxeuil monk or not, had close ties to Bishop Amandus, with whom Jonas worked. It was intended both to promote the cult of Vedast in the cathedral of Arras and as a tract on how bishops should behave in relation to the royal court. It was probably intended for the wider coterie of Columbanian-trained bishops who were then dominating the episcopal sees of Francia. In the *VJ*, Jonas similarly turned to the more distant past to provide a template for the Luxeuil-trained abbots of the new monastic foundations, as well as providing a spiritual work of contemplation for the Burgundian community of Réomé.

Like Columbanus, Jonas was concerned with issues about access to monastic space and monastic jurisdiction. The imprint of Columbanus is strong in Jonas, who entered Bobbio only a few months after the saint's death and who served as personal assistant to two Bobbio abbots, including Athala, one of the men closest to Columbanus. Jonas may have been responsible for preserving Columbanus's writings at Bobbio. It is important to emphasize that the *VC* was foremost a Bobbio work. It was not a dual enterprise of Luxeuil and Bobbio. Although addressed to the wider Columbanian *familia*, it was initiated by the Bobbio community. The work was aimed at a wider, elite audience in Merovingian Gaul consisting of the aristocratic, episcopal, and royal patrons of the Columbanian communities. Jonas was a significant historical figure in his own right. In seeking to locate him in the local, familial, monastic, and political contexts of his time, I have emphasized the complex divisions of the society in which he grew up, his high level of education, his sense of Italian identity, the significance of his name, his awareness of the ethnic diversity of his world, and the important aspect of pastoral and missionary work, in which, as an ordained priest, he became involved and which brought him to northern Gaul, where he served as an abbot.

A close reading of Jonas's hagiography also reveals aspects of his language and style, his knowledge of Classical literature, and his use of sources including important evidence for the early reception of the *Decem libri historiarum* of Gregory of Tours, Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*, and the *Conferences* of John Cassian. Above all, this reading shows the increasing use of hagiography as a medium of social discourse in the political sphere. We can trace in Jonas's hagiography the growing alliance between monasteries and secular authorities during this period and changing ideas in relation to sanctity, whereby an increasing

focus is placed on the sacredness of the monastic community and institution rather than on individual, charismatic holy men. This was a time of dynamic social, political, and religious change, processes that are reflected in many ways in Jonas's own life and work. In his writings, many of the transformations of the seventh century can be glimpsed.

Appendix

The Manuscripts of the *Vita Columbani*

This is a compilation of the lists of manuscripts in Bruno Krusch's 1905 edition of the *Vita Columbani* (*Ionae Vitae*, ix–xi), Richard Hayes's edition of the *Manuscript Sources for the History of Irish Civilization* (11 vols., Boston, 1965), vol. 1, consulted in the National Library of Ireland, Dublin, and from my own research. It does not purport to be a comprehensive list but aims to highlight a number of manuscripts that were unknown to Krusch in his edition. Alain Dubreucq, who is preparing a new edition of Jonas's *Vita Columbani* for the Sources Chrétiennes series, has identified additional manuscripts. With our combined lists, we have identified seventy-three new manuscripts that were unknown to Krusch, so that there are a total of 187 extant manuscripts of the *Vita Columbani*. I list 168 here, and Dubreucq is publishing the full list for his edition, which takes into account twelve additional manuscripts that I have identified. I am grateful to Dubreucq for sharing and comparing our lists.

Krusch divided the manuscripts into two classes, A and B, with B representing an "Italian" class. These classifications are given in square brackets after the manuscripts that were used by Krusch in his edition. Some of the manuscripts have also been discussed by Lawlor 1902–1904, reviewed (unfavorably) in Krusch 1904.

1. St Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, 553 (9th cent.) [A 1a].
2. Metz, Grand Séminaire, 1 (9th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
3. Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, 8518–20 (10th cent.) [A 1b].
4. Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, 7984 (10th cent.) [A 1b¹].
5. Einsiedeln, Stiftsbibliothek, 257 (10th cent.) [A 1a*].
6. Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale, F IV 26 (10th cent.) [B 1a].
7. Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale, F IV 12 (10th cent.) [B 1b].

8. Volterra, Bibliotheca Guarnacciana, 6777 (10th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
9. Zurich, Zentralbibliothek, C, 101 (10th cent.) [A 1b2].
10. Manchester, John Rylands University Library, Lat. 91 (olim Bibliotheca Lindesiana, 101) (10th cent.) [A 1a**].
11. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 430 (10th cent.) [A 1b4].
12. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 18546. 2 (10th /11th cent.) [A 1b3].
13. St Gallen, Staats-und Stiftsarchiv, Pfavers XII (10th/11th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
14. Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale, F III 15 (10th/11th cent.) [B 1b*].
15. Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Reg. lat. 1025 (11th cent.) [B 2].
16. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 5600 (11th cent.) [A 2].
17. Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense, 719 (alias B. I. 4) (11th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
18. Wormsley Park, Getty Library, BM4149 (olim Holkham Hall 129) (11th cent.) [B 1a*].
19. London, British Library, Add. 21917 (11th cent.) [B 1c].
20. Metz, Bibliothèque Municipale, 523 (11th cent.) [A 3].
21. Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale, F II 10 (11th cent.) [B 1b**].
22. Bern, Bürgerbibliothek, 48 (11th cent.) [A 4].
23. Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Conv. Soppr. A. 1. 1213 (11th cent.) [B 1d*].
24. The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, X, 73 (11th cent.) [A 2a].
25. Mantua, Biblioteca Comunale Teresiana, 475 (11th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
26. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 1087 (11th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
27. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 4628 (11th cent.) [A 1c*].
28. Bergamo, Biblioteca del Clero di S. Alessandro in Colonna, 227 (11th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
29. Augsburg, Universitätsbibliothek, I. 2. 4° 6 (olim Schloss Harburg, Fürstlich-Oettingen-Wallerstein'sche Bibliothek, I. 2) (11th cent.) [A1c].
30. Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, Ancien Fonds 642 (11th/12th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
31. Avignon, Bibliothèque de la Ville et Musée Calvet, 276 (12th cent.) [A 2†].
32. Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, B 55 inf. (12th cent.) [B 1g].
33. Saint-Omer, Bibliothèque Publique, 715 (12th cent.) [A 2a**.2].

34. Admont, Stiftsbibliothek, 2 (12th cent.) [B 1d].
35. Auxerre, Bibliothèque Publique, 127 (12th cent.) [A 2c5d].
36. Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, 9289 (12th cent.) [A 2b].
37. Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, 18018 (12th cent.) [A 2b1].
38. Heiligenkreuz, Stiftsbibliothek, 11 (12th cent.) [A 1b4a].
39. Heiligenkreuz, Stiftsbibliothek, 12 (12th cent.) [A 1b4a].
40. Heiligenkreuz, Stiftsbibliothek, 14 (12th cent.) [B 1e1].
41. Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Ashburnham 58 (12th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
42. Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 383 (12th cent.) [A 2c1].
43. Engelberg, Stiftsbibliothek, 2 (12th cent.) [A 1a***/ A 1b9].
44. Douai, Bibliothèque Municipale, 838 (12th/13th cent.) [A 2a+].
45. Lucca, Biblioteca capitolare Feliniana, Cod. F (12th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
46. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 17137 (12th cent.) [A 1c****].
47. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 21551 (12th cent.) [A 1b3].
48. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 22245 (12th cent.) [B 1e].
49. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 22240 (12th cent.) [A 1b3*].
50. St Gallen, Stiftsarchiv, 12 (12th cent.) [A 1f].
51. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Fell 2 (12th cent.) [A 2a3].
52. Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine, 1712 (12th cent.) [A 4a].
53. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 3788 (12th cent.) [B 1f].
54. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 5293 (12th cent.) [A 3x1].
55. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 5365 (12th cent.) [A 2*].
56. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 11951 (12th cent.) [A 2b7].
57. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 14487 (12th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
58. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 17007 (12th cent.) [A 2c5b].
59. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 16735 (12th cent.) [A 2c5a].
60. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 16732 (12th cent.) [A 2c5a].
61. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 16737 (12th cent.) [A 2c5a].
62. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 17004 (12th/13th cent.) [A 2c5b].
63. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 5330 (12th cent.) [A 6].
64. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 5336 (12th cent.) [A 2a++++].
65. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 5308 (12th cent.) [A 2a****].
66. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 11885 (12th cent.) [A 2c5g].
67. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Nouv. Acq. Lat. 1836 (12th cent.) [A 3+++].
68. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 5289 (12th cent.) (assigned incorrect 14th cent. dating by Krusch, Dolbeau, and Bollandists) [A 1b8].

69. Rein, Stiftsbibliothek, 51 (12th cent.) [A 3⁷].
70. Rouen, Bibliothèque Publique, U. 2 (12th cent.) [A 2b2].
71. Rouen, Bibliothèque Publique, U. 20 (12th cent.) [A 2b5].
72. Rouen, Bibliothèque Publique, U. 46 (12th cent.) [A 2b3].
73. Trier, Bistums-Archiv, 5 (12th cent.) [A 1d].
74. Trier, Bistums-Archiv, 93 A (12th cent.) [A 3^{***}].
75. Trier, Stadtbibliothek, 1146 (12th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
76. Turin, Biblioteca Reale, Fondo Varie 186 bis (12th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
77. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Ser. n. 3608 (12th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
78. Hereford, Cathedral Library, P.7.vi (12th cent.) [A2a2].
79. Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August-Bibliothek, Novi 404 (12th cent.) [A 1c+].
80. Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, Mp. th. f. 139 (12th cent.) [A 1c].
81. Erlangen, Universitätsbibliothek, 413, 1–3 (12th/ 13th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
82. Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Aedil. Flor. Eccles CXXXIV (12th/13th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
83. Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Mediceus (Pluteus) XX. 2 (12th/13th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
84. Montpellier, Bibliothèque Universitaire, H. 30 (12th/13th cent.) [A 2c].
85. Zwettl, Stiftsbibliothek, 15, 24 (12th/13th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
86. Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek, Rep. II 59a (olim Leipzig, Stadtbibliothek, 196) (12th cent.) [B 1e^{**}].
87. London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius D. IV (12th cent.) [A 2a1].
88. London, British Library, Harley 624 (12th cent.) [A 1e^{*}].
89. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 9506 (12th cent.) [B 1e^{*}].
90. Maihingen, Oettingen-Wallerstein'sche Sammlungen, I, 2 (Lat.), 4^o. 6 (12th cent.) [A 1c^{**}].
91. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 112 (12th cent.) [A 1e].
92. Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Reg. lat. 524 (12th cent.) [B 1f].
93. Verdun, Bibliothèque Publique, 1 (12th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
94. Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, 7460–61 (13th cent.) [A 2a^{**}].
95. Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, 207–208 (13th cent.) [A 1b7].
96. Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 383 (13th cent.) [A 2c1].
97. Hereford, Cathedral Library, P.I.vii (13th cent.) [A 2a2].
98. Namur, Bibliothèque du Musée Archéologique, Fonds de la Ville 15 (13th cent.) [A 2b^{*}].
99. London, British Library, Harley 2800–2801 (13th cent.) [A 1b6].
100. London, British Library, Harley 2802 (13th cent.) [A 3+].

101. Cividale del Friuli, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, XIX (13th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
102. Evreux, Bibliothèque Publique, 37 (13th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
103. Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Conv. Soppr. 302 (13th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
104. Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Conv. Soppr. 474 (13th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
105. Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Fondo Principale II. I. 412 (13th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
106. Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, Salem IX. 21 (13th cent.) [A 1b*].
107. Lucca, Biblioteca capitolare Feliniana, Cod. A (13th cent.) [B 1h].
108. Saint-Omer, Bibliothèque Publique, 716 (13th cent.) [A 2a**.3].
109. Troyes, Bibliothèque Municipale, 1 (13th cent.) [A 2c4a].
110. Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, B 33 inf. (13th cent.) [A 3x2].
111. Mons, Bibliothèque Publique, 26. 210. 8402 (13th cent.) [A 3****].
112. Montpellier, Bibliothèque Universitaire, H. 1 (13th cent.) [A 2c4].
113. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 5278 (13th cent.) [A 2a+++].
114. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 5293 (13th cent.) [A 3x1].
115. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 5297 (13th cent.) [A 2c3].
116. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 5330 (13th cent.) [A 6].
117. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 5352 (13th cent.) [A 2c5c].
118. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 11757 (13th cent.) [A 2c5e].
119. Rheims, Bibliothèque Municipale, 1144 (13th cent.) [A 2c2].
120. Rouen, Bibliothèque Publique, U. 22 (13th cent.) [A 2b4].
121. Schlaegl, Bibliothek Praemonstratenserstift, 14 Cpl. (823). 225 (13th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
122. Trier, Priesterseminar, 36 (R. I. 12) (13th cent.) [A 3*].
123. Trier, Stadtbibliothek, 1151 (13th cent.) [A 1b5].
124. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 336 (13th cent.) [A 1b4b].
125. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 339 (13th cent.) [A 1b4*].
126. Koblenz, Staatsarchiv, Gymnasium Abt. 701. 113a (14th cent.) [A 3++].
127. London, British Library, Add. 34387 (14th cent.) [A 2a4].
128. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 12642 (14th cent.) [B 1e2].
129. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 3820 (14th cent.) [B 1i].
130. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 5336 (14th cent.) [A 2a++++].
131. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 5360 (14th cent.) [A 4b].
132. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 11759 (14th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
133. Innsbruck, Universitätsbibliothek, 326 (14th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].

134. Berlin, Staatsbibliothek—Preussischer Kulturbesitz, theol. Lat. Oct. 162 (13th cent.) [A 5a].
135. Frankfurt, Stadt-und Universitätsbibliothek, Barth. 2–5 (14th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
136. Lambach, Stiftsbibliothek, Chart. 130 (14th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
137. Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, E III 9 (15th cent.) [A 1c++].
138. Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, 858–61 (15th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
139. Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, 197 (15th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
140. Besançon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 815 (15th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
141. Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, B. VIII. 26 (15th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
142. Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, A. VI. 36 (15th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
143. Augsburg, Staats-Kreis und Stadt-Bibliothek, 95 (15th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
144. The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 70 E. 21 (L. 29) (15th cent.) [A 5b***].
145. Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August-Bibliothek, 357 (Helmstad 322) (15th cent.) [A 1g].
146. Cologne, Stadtarchiv, W. 164 b (15th cent.) [A 5b].
147. Melk, Stiftsbibliothek, M. 8 (15th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
148. Magdeburg, Domgynasium, 138 (15th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
149. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud. Misc. 163 (15th cent.) [A 1c***].
150. Rouen, Bibliothèque Publique, U. 17 (15th cent.) [A 2b6].
151. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 14651 (15th cent.) [A 2c5f].
152. London, British Library, Add. 10933 (15th cent.) [A 1a+].
153. London, British Library, Harley 3597 (15th cent.) [A 1b5**].
154. Utrecht, Bibliotheek Der Rijksuniversiteit, 394 (15th cent.) [A 5b**].
155. Utrecht, Bibliotheek Der Rijksuniversiteit, 390 (15th cent.) [A 5b*].
156. Sankt Florian, Augustiner-Chorherren Stift, III, 8 (15th cent.) [A 1b10].
157. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 24809 (15th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
158. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 24131 (15th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
159. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 5512 (15th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].

160. Lilienfeld, Stiftsbibliothek, 74 (15th cent.) [A 3^{'*}].
161. Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale, F. II. 22 (15th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
162. Douai, Bibliothèque Municipale, 855 (15th cent.) [A 2a++].
163. Chartres, Bibliothèque Municipale, 479 (15th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
164. Darmstadt, Hessische Landesbibliothek, 763 (15th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
165. Cividale del Friuli, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, XII (15th cent.) [unknown to Krusch].
166. Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, 11987 (16th cent.) [A 2a^{**}.1].
167. Trier, Stadtbibliothek, 1349 (16th cent.) [A 3^{****}].
168. Trier, Stadtbibliothek, 1376 (16th cent.) [A 1b5].

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